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JOSEPH HOWE: VOICE OF NOVA SCOTIA

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JOSEPH HOWE: VOICE OF NOVA SCOTIA

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JOSEPH HOWE: VOICE OF NOVA SCOTIA

A SELECTION

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

J. MURRAY BECK

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J. A. CHISHOLM (ed.). *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* (Halifax, 2 vols., 1909), cited as Chisholm.

JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, NOVA SCOTIA, cited as Journals.

A VOLUME OF HOWE LETTERS COLLECTED BY J. A. CHISHOLM. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, cited as Howe Letters.

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INTRODUCTION

~ In this collection I have tried to let Joseph Howe reveal what kind of man he was through his letters and speeches. The task has been to select from several million words the seventy thousand which are best suited to this end. A considerable portion of the published Howe material is to be found in the large collections of Howe's speeches and letters edited by William Annand in 1858 and Joseph Chisholm in 1909. But since the compilation ascribed to Annand was entirely the work of Howe, and since three quarters of Chisholm's collection duplicates that material, the basis of selection in both collections was determined largely by Howe himself. Naturally he wanted to show himself at his literary or oratorical best.

In contrast, I have been interested in any material which sheds light upon the political Howe, no matter what its literary or oratorical merit. Hence, although I have excluded selections from his major non-political speeches, I have made extensive use of his private letters, and have not limited myself to his public letters as the earlier collections did. Furthermore, in Part One I have inserted considerable editorial comment from the *Novascotian* which is almost entirely omitted from the Annand and Chisholm volumes. But while I have used this wider basis of selection, I have been limited to less than one-tenth the space which was available in the Chisholm collection. This has meant that I could use only the most significant parts of even the major speeches and letters. For those readers who may wish to pursue any specific topic further, I have therefore included references for all the selections.

In organizing the collection I have found it possible to make an arrangement which is, to a large extent, both chronological and topical. Part One, which for the most part consists of selections hitherto unpublished in any secondary source, traces the

transition of Howe from mild Tory (as he viewed himself) to reforming assemblyman. Part Two deals with Howe's contribution to the winning of responsible government in Nova Scotia. Part Three and Part Four overlap in time, but maintain a largely chronological order within themselves. Part Three illustrates Howe's participation in domestic politics between 1848 and 1863, while Part Four shows how his views of Empire came into conflict with the Confederation scheme.

Joseph Howe grew up in Halifax in modest circumstances and without the benefit of a formal education. From an early age he assisted with the duties of King's Printer and Postmaster-General, the offices held by his father, Loyalist John Howe. Circumstances thus brought father and son into particularly close contact, and no one influenced Joseph Howe more than his father. Since the latter's offices provided only a modest income, Joseph left them to his half-brother, John Jr., and at the age of twenty-two entered the newspaper and printing business.

There he soon revealed the two qualities which, more than any others, determined his conduct and shaped his career. They were, first, a "restless, agitating uncertainty" and secondly, a reverential, almost mystical attitude towards the British connection.

From his early manhood Howe found an ordinary, humdrum type of existence intolerable. "If I could be content," he wrote, "to go along quietly and peaceably like my neighbours and at the end of some fifty or sixty years tumble into my grave and be dust, I should be happy – very happy."[1] But content to go along quietly he could not be, and in the never-ending pursuit of higher goals he established his pre-eminent position among the Nova Scotians of his day. When charged with "inoculating the public mind with extravagant and unrestrained ideas," he admitted pridefully that he was guilty of giving his countrymen enlarged views and concepts on many subjects. "I have striven," he said in 1853, "to elevate their eyes and minds from the little pedling muddy pool of politics beneath their feet to something more enobling, exalting and inspiring, calculated to enlarge the borders of their intelligence, and increase the extent and area of their prosperity."[2]

On many counts Howe merits the reputation of being the educator in public affairs of the Nova Scotians of his own day.

Certainly he lived up to the promise he made in the prospectus of the *Novascotian* – to furnish his readers all that properly came under the heading of news, whether British, Colonial, American or European. For the edification of his own subscribers, and to the eternal gratitude of students of later days, he personally reported the legislative debates in detail over an extended period. Without these accounts, as he himself put it, "the country would have been left in almost total ignorance of the measures urged and the sentiments avowed in the Assembly, and have been about as incapable of judging of the conduct of their Representatives, as if they had assembled on the moon."[3]

It was Howe again who published most of the works which established the basis for a provincial literature; it was Howe who urged that "every house be a school house"; it was Howe who advocated the elevation of the farmer and the mechanic through the formation of agricultural societies and mechanics' institutes; it was Howe who lectured his countrymen upon the evil consequences of idleness, extravagance, and waste, particularly in a young and growing country; and it was Howe who, practising what he preached, devoted most of his Sunday evenings to the instruction of his apprentices.

But these were merely his early contributions towards elevating the public character. By the late thirties he had set his sights much higher. He called upon his countrymen to make Nova Scotia a "Normal School" for the rest of the colonies to follow in securing responsible institutions, and, once they were obtained, in working them, "so as to insure internal tranquility, and advancement, in subordination to the paramount interest of and authority of the Empire."[4] With delight he noted even the smallest indication that a more intelligent public opinion was beginning to operate in Nova Scotian politics. Prior to the election of 1836, for example, he observed with satisfaction that the election cards by which candidates publicized their intention to seek election contained for the first time a statement of the principles which would govern their conduct if they were elected.

He was equally pleased that, as the tone of public opinion improved, election meetings tended to be characterized less and less by violence, drunkenness and debauchery, and more and more by a rational discussion of significant issues. Later he would boast, a bit unctiously perhaps, that Nova Scotia had secured responsible government without "a blow struck or a

pane of glass broken." With a little too much self-righteousness he would turn up his nose at the tactics used by the Canadians: "They would resort to their more modern and more effective expedients – a successful or an unsuccessful rebellion. They would burn down a Parliament House, and pelt a Governor General."[5] He might perhaps have acknowledged that his task was rendered somewhat easier because others were willing to adopt a stronger course than he.

An ordinary mortal who had led his people to significant political gains might have been satisfied for the time being with marking time. Not so Howe. As *de facto* if not *de jure* head of the Nova Scotian government, he immediately set to work to provide his own province, and for that matter, the British North American provinces, with adequate railway communications. "What," he asked, "is a Government for if it is not to take the lead in noble enterprises – to stimulate industry – to elevate and guide the public mind? You may set eight or nine men on red cushions or gilded chairs, with nothing to do but pocket their salaries, and call that a Government. To such a pageant I have no desire to belong. Those who aspire to govern others should neither be afraid of the saddle by day nor of the lamp by night. In advance of the general intelligence they should lead the way to improvement and prosperity."[6] What no collection of speeches, large or small, can possibly do is to indicate the incredible energy which Howe put into every major activity in which he saw fit to engage himself. Whether it was the struggle for responsible government, the advocacy of constructing railways as public works, or the campaign to prevent the British North America Act from being passed and later to have it repealed, he lost no opportunity to impress his views upon anyone who might conceivably exercise some influence in the decision-making process.

Howe was able to press his ideas and his projects all the more vigorously because he could always count upon the support of the Nova Scotian electorate. It is significant that on the only two occasions in which he tasted electoral defeat – in Cumberland in 1855 and Lunenburg in 1863 – nothing of real significance was before the voter. In appealing for support for his combined railroad-colonization project in 1851 he said: "I have never deceived – never deserted you. You will stand by me now in this last effort to improve our country, elevate these noble Provinces, and form them into a Nation. A noble heart is

beating beneath the giant ribs of North America now. See that you do not, by apathy or indifference, depress its healthy pulsations."[7] When his railway bills passed the Legislature, he boasted that his countrymen, as usual, had done everything that could be expected of them.

Much of the spell which Howe cast upon his native province depended upon his oratory. Professor Keith Thomas has shown that George Brown may have surpassed him in the grand style and that John A. Macdonald may have been a more brilliant tactician. But in other aspects of his oratory he had no equals. Above all, Professor Thomas writes, "he was a master of factual detail and its skilful presentation; in his smooth and effective transitions he possessed the last touch in structural skill; his astounding adaptability allowed him to persuade even a greater range and variety of audiences than those won over by the others; and his powerful rhythm could reinforce and make still more effective all his other qualities of persuasion." For these reasons he stood head and shoulders above his Nova Scotian rivals "in rousing attention no matter where he went, in enforcing his arguments, in stimulating the imagination of his hearers, and in exciting their feelings."[8]

Coupled with the attractiveness of his oratory was the great humanity of the man. The sophisticated families of Halifax, who in this context must be equated with the Tories, naturally frowned upon a *bon vivant* who was reputed to be a frequent associate of ne'er-do-wells in boisterous carousals. By the eighteen fifties the newspapers opposing him periodically referred to the coarseness of his language and the vulgarity of his stories or language. At one time, when he was being subjected to criticism from many quarters, he informed the House that he simply turned his "duff to these gad flies."[9] On another occasion, after J. W. Johnston, the Conservative leader, had accused him of ruining the province, he told the following story: "Why it was like the boarding-school Miss, who spent an evening at a party and came home with her dress soiled. 'Why,' said her mistress, 'you'll be ruined.' 'Oh, very well!,' replied the girl, 'I'd like to be ruined that way every night.' "[10] It was incidents such as these, his critics said, which impelled ladies to remove themselves from the galleries of the Assembly when he rose to speak. While his opponents exaggerated beyond reason this aspect of Howe's speech-making, undoubtedly he could be indelicate even in the Legislature itself.

Yet ordinary Nova Scotians cared not a whit that he offended the susceptibilities of the high and mighty of Halifax. Many of them could fondly recall incidents associated with "Joe" Howe. "We were down at Peggy's Cove a few weeks ago," said Howe in 1840, "and while sitting at tea, were informed that there was a fiddler in a neighbouring house, and that the young people were going to have a dance. We went to the place, and I never saw a finer lot of young men and women. I took off my coat and danced with them, and a most cheerful night was passed, without impropriety or excess. Towards twelve o'clock it was pleasant to see how each young fisherman's arm found its way round his sweetheart's neck, – and thus the scene passed on, cheerfully and innocent."[11] Sometimes the scene was far less happy. "In another harbour, I saw, not the only child, but a fair and beloved child lying at the point of death. The young mother hung over the dying cradle, her breast heaving heavily with convulsive sobs. I forgot that I was in a fisherman's hut, and among a poor man's family – I sat down by the cradle, endeavoured to soothe the sorrows of the mother, and almost mingled my tears with hers." "These," said Howe, "are the ties which bind us to the out-settlements, and I defy all the wealth of the Tories – all the influence of Bankers and Merchants of Halifax, to destroy and dissipate these bonds of kindliness and sympathy."[12]

Howe had no difficulty in persuading his fellow Nova Scotians to support his proposals to elevate the public character or promote material prosperity. But it was a different matter when the persons to be influenced were outsiders upon whom he could not bring the force of public opinion to bear. Professor J. A. Roy called his biography of Howe *A Study in Achievement and Frustration*. If frustrated he was, it was because he was unable to convince either the British government or the British Parliament of the wisdom of providing guarantees for his intercolonial railway projects, or of giving him a suitable Imperial appointment, or of accepting Nova Scotia's position on Confederation. But it was not for lack of trying. When the Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, first turned down his request for railway guarantees in December, 1851, Howe regretted that, because of indisposition, he was "not in good trim to fight an Imperial Government and agitate England. It will come to that at last."[13] On this occasion he managed to persuade Grey to retract his refusal and to permit him to test public opinion in a

public address at Southampton. "That I should stand, at some time or other, face to face with the people of England," he recorded in his diary, "has been for years my firm conviction."[14] Nevertheless, it does seem strange for a colonial to be telling a British audience that the British cabinet was merely waiting to be stimulated by public opinion before it ventured upon an elevated colonial policy.

The outcome was that Howe appeared to get everything he wanted in the way of guarantees for the colonial railroads. But six months later the project collapsed when Grey gave an interpretation to his despatch which differed materially from Howe's understanding of it. To the end of his days Howe blamed the Colonial Secretary's action upon the sinister influence of English contractors behind the scenes. "Oh! how I long to throw myself into the electoral fray with an *Address to the People of England*," he wrote in 1852. "If old Sir John [Harvey, the Lieutenant-Governor] were above the sod I would but we are still waiting for [his successor] and he, not knowing, would think me mad."[15] Fifteen years later Howe again thought of appealing to the British public over the heads of their government and Parliament on the Confederation scheme, but he finally thought better of it.

Actually Howe's "restless agitating uncertainty" and his pursuit of lofty objectives rescued him from his natural conservatism. It is therefore difficult to pin a political label upon him. Certainly he started out as an advocate of "the Constitution, the *whole* Constitution, and *nothing but* the Constitution."[16] Up to 1830 he regarded the defects in the governmental institutions as minor and easily righted. Yet these were the observations of a young man who had had no opportunity to study and hence understand the basic forces which determined how the machinery of government functioned. When he began to appreciate the true facts, his open-mindedness compelled him to admit the necessity of substantial change. But conservative reformer that he was, he refused to support change for the mere sake of change. The need had to demonstrate itself before innovation was justified. To press organic changes further than the circumstances required he considered to be wrong. When J. W. Johnston urged the desirability of an elective Legislative Council in the 1850's, Howe thought it better to "imitate a constitution which has grown up ripening and strengthening for a thousand years, and possessing an aspect of solidity and

permanence which the free institutions of our neighbours, admirable as they are, cannot rival. . . . Sir, I go for a system of administration, which has some experience to recommend it – a mode of conducting public business, which has been worked well for ages among the Anglo-Saxon people."[17] Yet, where the circumstances demanded it, Howe did not think that the Nova Scotian Legislature should shrink from adopting a sound principle until the Imperial Parliament set them the example. "I will not advise pulling down and changing merely for amusement," he once said, "but am anxious that this House should, without reference to what may be done in other Countries, or said across the water, ascertain where the shoe pinches *us*, and having done so, with a firm hand remove the evil."[18]

This general attitude was responsible for his pragmatic approach to problems of government. Never a great theoretician, Howe was normally willing to practise the politics of accommodation and to accept for the time being changes which went only part way towards securing ends which he held to be desirable. That is why he could be induced to enter into a coalition with the Tories between 1840 and 1843, an action which produced a split in the Reform party, and which may possibly have delayed the winning of responsible government. While Howe might be open to criticism on both grounds, he ought not to be accused of inconsistency, since he was simply conforming to his normal pattern of conduct.

Yet the label "conservative reformer" does not really explain Howe. While he was incapable of producing bold new ideas by cold, logical, rational thinking, he more than once gained new and sometimes brilliant insights into issues through his intuitions. He himself readily admitted that many of his accomplishments resulted from his obedience to impulses which he could not control. "Knowledge which I never acquired by study," he said, "flashed into my mind as if by inspiration."[19] One of these flashes inspired a basic argument of the colonial reformers for responsible government; another converted a mere railway project into an elevated Empire policy. Once activated by such flashes, Howe devoted an incredible amount of time and energy to pursuing objectives which in his own day were considered to be radical, perhaps even revolutionary. In this sense his "restless agitating uncertainty" can be said to have rescued him from his natural conservatism.

It also made him an extremely ambitious man. Almost in-

stinctively Howe assumed the leading role in every venture in which he participated. After the project had been successfully launched and appeared to be proceeding to a satisfactory conclusion, he invariably looked around for new fields to conquer. Thus by 1854 he saw nothing in Nova Scotia which presented a suitable challenge for a man of his proven abilities, and he yearned for an Imperial appointment which would permit him to use his talents to the full. Having got nothing by 1858, he made the idle threat that he would never again accept office under a Lieutenant-Governor. Why was he unsuccessful in getting the employment he wanted? Perhaps it was because his imbroglio with Lord Falkland fastened upon him "the cardinal sin of indiscretion."[20] But it may also have been that no Colonial Secretary wished to employ a man so pregnant with ideas and so vibrant with energy. Certainly, when Imperial appointment did come in 1863, it was to an office which enabled him neither to propose bold new ideas nor to outshine other officials.

Howe's "restless agitating uncertainty" made him appear also as extremely egotistical. While his critics exaggerated this trait, he undoubtedly elaborated his accomplishments in a manner calculated to irritate and annoy. Sometimes, when he accompanied this extolling of his own virtues with a fawning, ingratiating attitude towards those who might render him favours, he could be downright obnoxious. In contrast, his diaries indicate that in his contemplative moments he was an exceedingly humble man, one who kept expressing his gratitude to Providence for all its mercies.

The depth and significance of Howe's reverential attitude towards Britain and the British inheritance is not generally appreciated. There are some who have regarded him, above all, as a Nova Scotian patriot. Certainly few have expressed their love of native land better than he. "Here is the country of my birth," he said; "this little spot, between Cape North and Cape Sable, is dear to me, as a Nova Scotian, above every other place – and while priding myself in the glories of the Empire, I respect, as a native should do, the soil on which I tread."[21] From the time he first ventured outside of Halifax on his "Western Rambles" in 1828, he was lost in admiration for the beauties of rural Nova Scotia. Where, he often asked, was there a spot which could compare with the country extending from

the Ardoise hills to Digby Gut (i.e., the Annapolis Valley)? Often he would compare Nova Scotia with the province of Canada to the latter's disadvantage: "Expansive and magnificent as are the western lakes – their waters don't look blue. Lie down to sleep beside them, and let fever and ague teach you the difference. I would rather live in sight of the sea on two meals a day, than in rich abundance where its endless variety was wanting, or the sound of the surges a tradition."[22]

And yet Howe was undoubtedly expressing his true feelings when he stated, "I am a dear lover of old England, and to save her would blow Nova Scotia into the air or scuttle her like an old Ship."[23] He spoke these words on the Confederation issue, but the youthful editor of the *Novascotian* had similarly expressed himself during the 1820's and 1830's, sometimes in almost mystical language. Britain, he then pointed out, had stood "for ages . . . a beacon light upon the borders of the old world, luring the nations to wealth, intelligence and freedom." After reviewing her many contributions to mankind, such as the English language and the truths of natural, moral and political science, he would exult that they were "as much the property of a Briton by the banks of the Avon, the Hillsborough, or the St. John, as by the Liffey, the Tweed or the Thames."[24] He willingly admitted "the right of the resident Englishmen to property in the [English] soil, and to all the wealth that it sustains," but he insisted upon the right of colonists to "participate in all that our forefathers have transmitted that ministers to national pride."[25]

Let me individualize a little. I walk into Westminster Abbey and the Howe banner hangs as high as any other in Henry the 7th's Chapel. I walk into Greenwich Hospital and there stands Black Dick [Howe], *in white marble, but with the broad chest and ample forehead which the Howes "of this ilk" have never wanted. Now I feel that I have a property in these two noble piles which our common ancestors built and bequeathed, quite equal to that of any gentleman in London, and . . . may I not be pardoned if I am as proud as any Lord of the Bedchamber who inheriting Lord Howe's title and Estates may not have done as much to preserve the Empire for which he fought as his humble namesake across the sea.*[26]

Every now and then Howe would point out that of the original Howe stock which emigrated to America his father was the

only descendant who became a Loyalist; and that, as his only surviving son, he wanted, whenever he stood by his father's grave, to feel that he had done his utmost to preserve the connection which his father had valued and to make certain that the British flag continued to wave above the soil in which he slept. Whenever Howe referred to "home" in his speeches and letters, it was Britain which he meant; when he used the word "national" it was normally in an Empire context.

After British troops had experienced difficulties in the Crimea, Howe would have endured any hardship to provide assistance.

If instructed, at that moment, to violate the laws and contravene the policy of any foreign state, in order to give the gallant fellows in the Crimea effective succour, I would have obeyed without a moment's hesitation – there is no prison so loathsome in which I would not have cheerfully spent five years, to have placed five regiments, in the spring of 1855, under the walls of Sebastopol.[27]

When some of the Irish Catholics of Halifax exulted in English reverses in the Crimea, when they interfered with his recruiting campaign in the United States, when they sought to insult a British official who had assisted him during the same mission, an outraged Howe finally put them in their place. But eventually his burning zeal against this Irish faction betrayed him into offending the entire Catholic population, and appeared on the surface to give the lie to "a long life devoted to the establishment, in Nova Scotia, of political, religious and social equality."[28] This was actually not so, but in any case the unfortunate episode served to demonstrate once more his profound attachment to Britain.

Thus, when he sought to reform the Nova Scotian governmental system, it was not surprising that he emphasized his intention to introduce the responsibility of the British system. Once he had examined the Durham Report he had no doubt that this responsibility must be introduced through a responsible ministry of the British type. When Lord John Russell argued that the separation of the colonies from the Empire was likely if colonial governors took the advice of responsible colonial executives instead of the Colonial Secretary, Howe had one of his most important "flashes." He told Russell that colonists who

were denied the normal rights of British citizens were, in effect, separated from the Empire. Because they crossed the Atlantic was no reason to "shut out the civil privileges and political rights, which more than anything else, [made] them proud of the connection" with Britain. Surely they had done nothing which justified this alienation of their birthright. "We ask for nothing more than British subjects are entitled to; but we shall be contented with nothing less."[29] Give the colonists the rights which their English brethren possessed, he concluded, and they would be truly united to Britain.

Even before responsible government had formally been conceded, Howe had broadened his concept of what colonists could demand as the normal rights of British citizens. They might insist, he argued, upon the right to participate in those decisions of the British Parliament which directly affected the interests of the colonies. "We must," he said, "be Britons in every inspiring sense of the word."[30] Throughout his speeches at this stage of his career he interspersed sentences such as the following: "I will live under no flag, with a brand of inferiority to the other British races stamped upon my brow. . . . The sons of the rebels are men full-grown; the sons of the loyalists are not. . . . How long is this state of pupilage to last? . . . How long are we to have this play of Hamlet with Hamlet himself omitted? . . . Talk of annexation, sir! what we want is annexation to our mother country . . . what we require is union with the empire; an investiture with the rights and dignity of British citizenship."[31]

On these grounds Howe appealed to English statesmen to lay the foundations of British power on an indestructible basis. By organizing the Empire to give colonials a voice in decisions affecting them, Britain would also be opening a wider field for the honourable aspirations of the leading colonial minds. As for himself, "to win a position here, in the heart of my fatherland, is my highest ambition. If no career can be opened for one so trained and so disposed, the conclusion is depressing."[32] But personal ambitions had nothing to do with his theories of Empire organization. Indeed, he had expounded them for almost a decade before he seriously considered the possibility of Imperial appointment for himself. They were but the natural outgrowth of his background, experience, and attitudes. They stood in direct opposition to the views of the Cobdenites and the Manchester school, of whom he spoke disparagingly more than once.

Several times he urged Colonial Secretaries to take a stand in support of closer Empire ties in order to emphasize their own lack of sympathy with the "little Englanders."

Where does intercolonial union fit into this picture? Periodically, after 1837, Howe talked or wrote approvingly of an eventual intercolonial union and the establishment of a great British country in North America. But whenever he gave the matter his closest attention he confessed that the difficulties in the way constituted a practical impediment to union in the immediate future. The idea of a capital in the backwoods of Canada almost as far distant as London from Nova Scotia was sufficient in itself to chill his enthusiasm. By the early 1850's the idea of organizing the Empire dominated his thinking, and intercolonial union stood far down in his list of priorities. "Talk of a union of the Provinces, which, if unaccompanied with other provisions, would lead to separation! What we require is union with the empire. . . ."[33] The "other provisions" included, above all, intercolonial railway communications. "I would leave," he said, "the people thus brought together *and combined into an industrial and defensive union* to seek more intimate political relations as time and mutual intercourse might incline us to accept them."[34] He made this statement during the Confederation debate, but in so doing he was merely re-stating an opinion which he had expressed many times since 1854.

The principles incorporated in the Quebec Resolutions did nothing to overcome Howe's doubts about union. To him the projected federation was simply a means of getting the province of Canada out of its political difficulties. It is significant that Howe's major statement of the case against the proposals was entitled *Confederation Considered in Relation to the Interests of the Empire*. In that pamphlet, as in his speeches and letters, he argued that the Quebec scheme might well be one for dismembering the British Empire. Past history had demonstrated the extreme difficulty of making a central Parliament function in conjunction with regional Legislatures. The difficulty of working such a scheme would be all the greater because of the French Canadians being interposed between two English-speaking populations. A more unlikely nucleus for a new nation, he felt, could hardly be found anywhere. To make its governmental institutions operate harmoniously would require "the wisdom of Solomon and the energy and strategy of Frederick the Great."[35]

But was not this the type of challenge which was especially suited to Howe, the man of vision? Did it not present the opportunity for self-realization for which he had long been clamouring? As he saw it, he had to choose between an organized Empire and an intercolonial union which was so impracticable that it might lead to the dismemberment of the existing Empire. History has shown him to be in error in assessing which alternative was the more impracticable. While his vision of a Commonwealth consisting of entities equal in status was eminently sound, he did not appreciate the strength of the forces which militated against any formal centralized machinery for its government. To him the other alternative was the impracticable one. Who, he asked, "would be such an idiot as to embark in this crazy Confederacy with a mongrel crew half French and English and certain to be sent to the bottom at the first broadside"?[36]

George Brown's proposition that the new nation should acquire the Hudson's Bay Company's territory and extend its sway to the Pacific was, in his opinion, a "monstrosity."[37] It would be just another factor in promoting the disintegration of the federation and in leading to its fragments seeking union with the United States. British statesmen, he continued, should seriously consider the effect of losing Nova Scotia. Its mercantile marine was carrying no mean share of the commerce of the Empire; it was an invaluable source of supplies and stores for the Royal Navy, and its capital city provided an irreplaceable base of operations for Britain in North America. To Howe's chagrin, he found no one in England who considered Nova Scotia of quite the same value to the Empire as he did. Nevertheless, he kept on asking, What colony would choose Ottawa for a capital when she had had London and could have New York? "We go in for 'the Empire one and indivisible' but when the old ship is broken up, we are not such fools as to trust our lives in a crazy craft in which we are certain to be drowned."[38]

The commonly accepted belief that Howe's attitude towards the Quebec Resolutions resulted from his determination not to play second-fiddle to Tupper is largely a myth. As Howe himself pointed out, there was hardly an appointment he could not have got in the new Dominion if he had supported the Quebec scheme. But more importantly, he could not have become a Confederate without acting inconsistently with his past position or without doing apparent harm to a project to which he had given top priority for more than a decade. Certainly he did not

find it displeasing to oppose Tupper, but he adopted the position he did on much higher grounds than refusal to play a subordinate role to a younger rival.

Howe's attachment to Britain also helped to determine the outcome of the Confederation crisis in Nova Scotia. By the autumn of 1868 he had exhausted every legal weapon at his disposal to break the union. As he pointed out more than once, if the Canadians had been alone in this matter, he and his sons would have stationed themselves along the Tantramar Marshes and resisted the loss of his province's independence. But he would have had to fight Britain too, something which was not only impracticable but utterly distasteful to a loyal Briton. With reluctance he started a correspondence with Sir John Macdonald and eventually he "accepted the situation" for want of an alternative. While the negotiations were proceeding, he was appalled at the growth of annexationist sentiment in the province. For months he had been telling the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Hastings Doyle, in confidence that he would do his utmost to prevent matters from getting out of hand. Since it was well known in Ottawa that he would on no account resort to force, he may have weakened his bargaining power. His few ventures into print during the closing months of 1868 were only to chastize or point out the folly of those who advocated violence or annexation.

But these events left an indelible mark upon Howe. Above all, they had the sorry effect of destroying his faith in English public men and making him completely disillusioned with the British political process. Over the years he had built up an idyllic picture of the British Parliament; hence its altogether inadequate performance on the bill to unite the provinces of British North America shocked and dismayed him. As for British political leaders, he used to believe that "in a case involving vested interests, constitutional rights, and great sums of money, British Statesmen and Legislators would do justice, though the Heavens should fall." But now he had to add: "With deep sorrow, and a sense of humiliation not easily described, I now am compelled to acknowledge that I have cherished a delusion."[39]

As a consequence, Howe became highly skeptical of the future of the British Empire during his last years. Few Englishmen, he realized for the first time, cared quite as much for the Empire as he did; many of them thought only of England, and

felt it desirable to set the colonies adrift lest they should be a source of peril or expense to the mother country. When the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Washington commenced, he told his cabinet colleagues that the British plenipotentiaries would buy peace for themselves at Canada's expense, much "as the Russian woman flings her children to the wolves,"[40] and he was not too far off the mark. Later he thoroughly annoyed Sir John Macdonald by telling a public meeting in Ottawa that England was giving North America away bit by bit. Physically he was infirm at the time, but mentally he fully appreciated what he was doing. Knowing that he could not be displaced, he spoke his mind freely about those who had made his vision of Empire a mere will-o'-the-wisp. Yet his natural ebullience had already convinced him that, if the colonists could win self-government on their own initiative, they would surely be able to fend for themselves in any eventuality.

Howe was a highly complex individual. Although basically a conservative reformer, he is known chiefly for his pursuit of radical, even revolutionary objects. Personally he thought of himself as a liberal; yet he outdid even the most ardent Tory in his devotion to Britain. He had undoubted faults: he was egotistical and perhaps too ambitious; he sometimes left a good deal to be desired in his choice of tactics; he reacted violently at times when subjected to continued provocation. But on matters of substance his course of action was at least predictable. For few have conformed more consistently than he to a basic core of attitudes and values.

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September, 1964

The symbol ~ has been used throughout the text to indicate material interpolated by the editor. In preparing this selection of Howe's writings for the Carleton Library, slight changes have been made in the punctuation of editorials and reported speeches to improve their readability.

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PART ONE

MILD TORY TO REFORMING ASSEMBLYMAN

1. EARLY INFLUENCES

~ No one influenced Joseph Howe more than his father. Above all, John Howe Sr. impressed moderation upon his son, and emphasized the duty of service to one's fellows. A second major influence was the extensive reading which Howe undertook to make up for an almost complete absence of formal education. ~

My Father was my only instructor, my play-fellow, almost my daily companion. To him I owe my fondness for reading, my familiarity with the Bible, my knowledge of old Colonial & American incidents and characteristics. He left me nothing but the example and the memory of his many virtues, for all that he ever earned was given to the poor.

(*George Johnson Papers* [Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada].)

Scarcely a day passes that [my father] is not of some service to his children – either by lightening their labours, guiding them by his advice, or honouring them by his example. His society is at all times as pleasant as it is instructive. The only differences of opinion we ever have are as to the propriety of hammering some of our great folks. He, as you know, thinks this the best of all possible worlds, and the people upon it the best of all possible people. I do not give them credit for so much, and in order to make them better have resort to the lash occasionally. He is still however a useful public man, and performs the duties of a Magistrate as ably and energetically as ever. With his talents, instead of bowing to our big wigs half his life, he ought to have led one half – driven the other and kept them all in salutary respect and fear. Perhaps it is better as it is. I think we all love him the more.

(Letter of January, 1832, *George Johnson Papers*)

At present my time through the day is entirely taken up between the Post Office and Printing Office – and if it was not for my maxim of borrowing from the night – my stock of ideas would receive but precious few additions. I generally read or write till 12 or 1 – Sometimes if the book is amusing and the fire does not go out, I make it later – the only time, I at present have time for thought is during my walks between Halifax and the Arm, and an hour or two after I get into bed. My books are very few, but then the world is before me – a library open to all – from which poverty of purse cannot exclude me – and in which the meanest and most paltry volume is sure to furnish something to amuse, if not to instruct and improve.

(Letter of January, 1824, *George Johnson Papers*)

~ Since Howe realized that his father's government offices could do no more than provide a living for his elder brother, he contemplated (but quickly abandoned) the idea of seeking his fortune in South America. For a time he turned to writing poetry – pursuing a kind of warfare with the Muses, as he described it – but nothing could dispel the restless feeling within him. ~

Trade, indeed everything in Halifax, has been very dull – at our business there is very little doing indeed – with the exception of about two months in the Spring the Post Office and Printing Office together hardly furnish half enough to employ my head and my hands about, and we are so situated, being the servants of government, that we cannot extend our concern in any way as to make more employment and more profit, because we can never take the popular side in anything that may be going forward, and by continuing where I am, I must eventually become a burthen upon the concern, and, in some measure stand in the light of John's children, which I am determined never to do – and added to this as we are under government we cannot enjoy here the free expression of our own sentiments – and are not infrequently subject to the caprice of men in office – this while a boy I never liked – and now when a man I never could put up with.

(Letter to half-sister, May 2, 1824, *Howe Letters*, collected by J. A. Chisholm [Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia] p. 1)

I read scarcely any Poetry, Plays or Novels – and very seldom "committed the sin of rhyme" – until this winter, when I wrote "Melville Island." The success which that met with (for

it was praised here more than it deserved) although it has not caused me to alter my resolution – yet has awakened feelings which I have long ago striven to smother, and sometimes calls up hopes, which I readily recognize as the spectres which flitted before my path, even in childhood, throwing a shade over it of doubt and restless, agitating uncertainty. If I could be content to go along quietly and peaceably like my neighbours and at the end of some fifty or sixty years tumble into my grave and be dust, I should be happy – very happy. But this infernal feeling, whatever it be, still points to something ahead which is viewless and undefined – and would, right or wrong – have me pursue it.

(Letter of March 26, 1826, *Howe Letters*, p. 4)

2. AS PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

~ In 1826 Howe was still undecided about his future, but he was confident that he could "always provide for myself by starting a Paper either here or elsewhere." It was therefore no surprise when, in partnership with James Spike, he took over an existing paper, the *Weekly Chronicle*, in 1827, and published it as the *Acadian*. ~

As it is I contrive to make the *penny candle* burn as brightly as its neighbours, and under the Editorial shelter of that great Battery "We" thunder away as much nonsense as my contemporaries. I shall soon become a perfect Quidnunc. I already read papers by the dozen, write long leading articles upon subjects about which I know nothing and speculate most gravely upon political changes and affairs of State and all the various "accidents by flood and field" which come within the reach of my good quill. When tired of Editorial restraint and its attendant cant and humbug, I put on the reverend wig and sober phiz of *Fred Maple* and ramble along in my own way – perhaps mount Pegasus and gallop a distance of four or five verses which you may occasionally see signed with four stars.

(Letter of May 29, 1827, *Howe Letters*, p. 7)

~ Within a year Howe took over the *Novascotian* from George Young, running it on his own as of January 1, 1828. His first year in his new venture gave him great satisfaction. ~

I began the world, to be sure, only a year and a half ago, at which time my goods and chattels were not perhaps worth more than £5. Having some trust in Providence – and (as you know

I always had) a modest reliance on my own head and hands, I saddled myself with a wife and obligation to pay £1050 or £210 a year for five years, and went to work to feed and clothe the former and to fulfil the latter as well and as fast as I could. I took the paper from Young, under the conviction that I should lose at least 100 subscribers the first year, as I was a stranger to them all, and perhaps might not be able to keep it up to the old standard – instead of which I have now nearly a hundred more than he ever had, and in the past year did as much job printing as doubled my calculations when I took the concern. In addition to this I have been printing 3,000 copies of Haliburton's History of the Province by which I shall clear a handsome sum, so that all things considered, I have great reason to be thankful, as I believe few who begin with nothing have done more in a year and a half. I now feel no apprehension but what I shall, in a few years realize a permanent, perhaps handsome, independence.

(Letter of July 5, 1829, *Howe Letters*, p. 8)

~ In taking over the *Novascotian*, Howe issued a prospectus outlining the principles upon which he would conduct it. Periodically thereafter he discussed the functions of an editor, and the relations between his subscribers and himself. ~

While we were connected with the Acadian, by far the greater portion of our time was devoted to a Government Office; which, although we never allowed it to bias our opinions, to warp our judgments, or restrain our pen, left us open to imputations, which strike at the foundation of an Editor's usefulness, and make his actions and opinions liable to distrust. We now stand free of every connexion – beyond the influence of Government – and we trust above the suspicions of the people. . . .

The motto on our title page in part explains our political creed, which may be resolved into this: the Constitution, the *whole* Constitution, and *nothing but* the Constitution. We are no cold approvers, but ardent admirers of the system under which we live. We are not blind to its blemishes, but feeling alive to its excellence; like a candid critic, who in contemplating the numberless beauties of a work, looks mildly on its imperfections. Whatever goes to extend or to secure the advantages which of right ought to flow to the People, from the wholesome operation of this system, we shall steadily and fearlessly uphold. But the Press, like a two edged Sword, waving round the Constitutional Tree, should defend it alike from the misguided zeal of

the People, and the dangerous encroachment of Rulers; and he who would timidly shrink from the performance of this double duty is unfit to put his hand to the hilt. We will therefore as steadily defend the Government when its acts are just, as we will boldly warn the People when they are unjust. . . .

No effort of ours shall be wanting, to preserve the Novascotian's character for interest and usefulness. To send to the desk of the Merchant, and the fireside of the Farmer, the information best adapted to their wants, we shall consider a duty, and to gain that information will spare neither labour or expense.

The Periodical Literature of Great Britain and America is rich with instruction and amusement; and a regular supply of the leading Reviews and Magazines, will enable us to draw largely on its stores; while files of British, Colonial, and American Papers will furnish our Readers with all that properly comes under the head of News. . . .

To foster and extend our Provincial Literature will be our most peculiar care; and we earnestly invite the contributions of those whose talents or acquirements may stamp a value on their offerings. For very many years the Newspaper Press must be the great medium of instruction to the People, and every Essay on morals or manners, science or literature, which breathes a sound and healthy tone, will be gladly welcomed to our pages. . . .

To conclude . . . we ask but a fair and candid hearing. . . . We are not without a hope, that as the Provinces increase in wealth, taste and intelligence, the character of the Colonial Herald [i.e., the *Novascotian*] will be marked by a corresponding elevation.

(*Novascotian*, January 2, 1828)

The wisest of our British sages truly says, that "the greatest trust between man and man is the trust of giving counsel; for in other confidences men commit the parts of their life, their lands, their goods, their children, their credit, some particular affair: but to such as they make their counsellors, they commit the whole; by how much more they are obliged to all faith and integrity." In no relation is it of more importance that the spirit of this maxim should be preserved, than between an Editor and his readers. He looks to them for support – they look to him for counsel; and in the liberal confidence which a course of upright conduct and fearless counsel inspires, he enjoys a reward far

above the momentary applause which a subserviency to popular impulse may obtain, or the poor boon which the sale of his political integrity may purchase. He cannot be bought by the wealthy, for he is rich in a people's esteem, and in the profits of a reputable calling; he cannot be awed by the powerful, for he knows that those by whom he is upheld are the origin of power, and the avengers of its abuse; he cannot be alarmed by the sudden ebulitions of popular feeling, because he is confident that when the wand of reason is stretched over the billows which accident or faction may have raised, they will almost immediately subside. . . .

To write for a party is the easiest, and perhaps the pleasantest employment in the world: because, while a man cares little for the censure of others, he is sure of the support and applause of his own particular faction. They laugh at all his jests, and take his opinions as the apothegms of an Oracle. . . . He who stands upon his own principles, however, and goes no further with any party than his judgment approves, must expect at times to differ with all; and he will be very fortunate, if by all, in turn, he is not suspected and reviled. The short experience we have had has convinced us that the occasional endurance of suspicion – the stemming of abuse, are inseparable from the impartial performance of our duties.

(Legislative Review No. 1, *Novascotian*, July 9, 1829)

[Without the *Novascotian*'s reports of the legislative debates] the country would have been left in almost total ignorance of the measures urged and the sentiments avowed in the Assembly, and have been about as incapable of judging of the conduct of their Representatives, as if they had assembled on the moon. This has been the seventh session that we have reported the Debates, and in that time have, we dare say, written as much Ms. as we could carry. We are paid for our labour in the satisfaction afforded to our readers – the information diffused throughout the Province, and in the consciousness that in after times, these reports will convey to the generation that succeeds us, very valuable data from which to judge of the character and sentiments of the present age, and of the early habits and conditions of the country.

(*Novascotian*, April 24, 1834)

Having now, for some months past, given to Legislators and Correspondents the almost uncontrolled dominion over our

pages . . . we are [now] determined . . . to blow a blast occasionally through our own trumpet. . . .

The time was when this used to be a matter of more labour and anxiety to us than it is now. . . . But now that years have established a freedom of intercourse, a band of friendship between us, it is a pleasure and not a toil to commune with those who are endeared to us by many pleasant or exciting passages of life; and even with some hundreds whose faces perhaps we never saw, but of whose regard and good wishes we are well assured. We sit in our Editorial Chair as if in the midst of a family circle; we take up our pen, as though we were about to pour out our thoughts, without disguise or restraint, to those who take the same interest in our welfare that we do in theirs, and the severity of whose criticism is certain to be tempered by old recollections and growing confidence.

(*Novascotian*, May 19, 1836)

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

~ Howe continually emphasized the necessity for Nova Scotians to become better educated and informed, either through their own exertions or through societies and institutes. ~

Had we the power which Asmodée bestowed on Don Cleofas – could we look into every man's dwelling when it suited our inclination, and, all unseen ourselves, behold the most secret actions of each; we would not, like him, hover over the crowded city, and sate a fiendish curiosity with gazing on its vices. The webs of the hypocrite we should not stay to unravel; the follies of the gay, or the destructive indulgence of the great we should not care to behold. But to every cottage of our young and growing country we would extend our gaze, to see how their inmates spent their winter evenings; and from the impressions gathered in that wide survey, would we form an estimate of our present character as a People, and of our probable advancement in a useful and honourable career. . . .

The extent of artificial refinement may be sought in the capital. But the great elements, the real stamina of a country's character, must be looked for in the habits, feelings, and moral and intellectual cultivation of its peasantry. . . .

To every member of a farmer's family, a Winter Evening is or ought to be an important affair. . . . Let every farmer gather

the youngsters about his knees at night, and spreading a volume of some kind before them teach them all he knows himself. . . . And would not Fathers be doing their duty more faithfully to themselves, their families and their country, by thus spending their time, than by gathering round a Tavern Tap to debase their own minds instead of enlightening those of their children. Let each man labour as though the character of the Province was his individual concern. . . .

Genius may require to be breathed into the soul, but it must be fanned by the domestic hearth; and therefore boys let not your hours be wasted – let every house be a school house.

(Winter Evenings, *Novascotian*, November 27, 1828)

Rural and Mechanical Science. – In all new countries the progress of science must necessarily be slow, and the rise of useful and valuable Societies extremely difficult; those who leave older countries find so much else to do on their arrival in the wilderness, that the arts with which they may have been familiar, insensibly sink in their own estimation. . . . For a while this is perhaps the most natural and beneficial state of things; but, the evil is that by the time a sufficient progress has been made to render the operations of Science necessary – the Arts useful as well as ornamental – the settler has lost his opinion of their importance; has acquired new habits, new tastes, and from having found certain practices answer his ends tolerably well, can hardly be brought to believe in the fact that with half the labour they can be performed much better. . . .

As regards the Agriculturalists Societies might be formed in every district, sufficiently populous, the objects of which should be . . . to draw from every source within their reach the information best calculated to assist them in their pursuits, and to foster and keep alive a fondness for, and a thorough knowledge of, the latest and most approved principles of rural economy. . . . If ten, twenty, or thirty of them associated together, the trifling contribution of a few shillings, would give them a weekly, monthly, or quarterly supply of the latest publications on Horticulture and general tillage; and if they felt inclined to enlarge their range, a few standard works might easily be added to their collections. . . .

To the Mechanics, we would not perhaps recommend the wide range pursued in the Institutes at home, but we would like to see them adopt as much of their practice as the circumstances

of the Provinces will allow. . . . Both in Halifax and St. John, very efficient and useful Societies might be organized, and in the larger country towns, corresponding efforts could be made to spread among mechanics that kind of information which bears most heavily on their respective employments. . . .

There is sometimes a timidity, *a mauvaise honte*, which prevents men from taking the lead even in doing good. . . . But for a Race, a Regatta, a Ball, a Dinner, men will canvass a whole country – spend days and nights in making preparations; and, yet talk to them of establishing an Institution for useful purposes, and so many fears and regrets start up at once to justify their apathy, that one is almost disposed to believe that intellectual cultivation is a thing to be shunned and neglected. Men wonder now, that a Library was not established in Halifax 20 years ago; we wonder it was not, but what prevented it? The same torpidity of spirit and want of correct views, which now check the growth of other Institutions of equal, and perhaps paramount importance.

(*Novascotian*, August 21, 1828)

~ None did more to perform the educative and informing function than Howe himself. ~

It has been my wish . . . to earn not only the reputation of a sound politician, but . . . to inspire by precept and example. For many years I devoted the Sabbath evenings to the instruction of my Apprentices, and the result has been, that many of them have grown, and are growing up, with cultivated and vigorous minds, befitting them for every station; and I know not anything that gives me greater pleasure, than to see one of these young men conducting a Newspaper in New Brunswick – two others superintend the Messenger – and a third the Register office – a fourth a persevering and successful Bookseller – and a fifth the purchaser and future Proprietor of the Establishment in which he was bred. It is gratifying to me also to reflect, that while those young men are prepared to take up useful positions in society, the highest offices in the country have been proved, by their old master, to be within the range of their legitimate ambition. . . .

The growth of literature in every country depends a good deal on the enterprise and liberality of its publishers. In this branch of my profession I have endeavoured, I trust, to set a good example. Most of the Works which have had a tendency

to elevate the character of the country – to make it known at home and abroad – and to lay the foundation of a Provincial Literature, that have appeared within the past twelve years, have issued from The Novascotian Press. Haliburton's History of the Province, Murdoch's Epitome of the Laws, Cooney's New Brunswick, the Clockmaker, and several other Works were published by me; and, for a year, I vainly assayed, with the able assistance of the Editor, to sustain a periodical devoted exclusively to Literature and Science. I would perhaps have attempted to do more, but while I have published a volume a year for every year that I have been in business – by none of them making much, and by some of them losing heavily, I trust I have done something, to point the way towards a field which will bye and bye admit of more brilliant and profitable cultivation.

(*Novascotian*, December 30, 1841)

~ Howe wanted education to be within the reach of every child, and to attain that end he pressed for compulsory assessment on numerous occasions. But the prejudice against property taxation was such that he always failed to marshal sufficient backing for it in the Legislature. ~

The subject of education . . . is one of the most important which the Legislature can be called upon to consider. Compared with it, questions of roads and of fisheries and of politics, sink into insignificance. . . . For if the people are intelligent – if they are educated – they will not be without the means of raising money, of making roads, of forwarding enterprise and regulating matters of trade. . . .

Gentlemen may say that the principle of assessment involves great responsibility; but let me inquire, is there no responsibility involved in not accomplishing anything, in not doing what good is in our power? If I could see a great majority of the House declare that education should be within the reach of every family in the Province, that every child should get the rudiments of learning, I would willingly assume the responsibility and would cheerfully retire from the Assembly if that should be the penalty, satisfied that I, as one, have done good enough; that those with whom I have been associated have conferred great blessings on the country. . . .

The duty of the Province is, so far as it can, to emulate the example of that great country from which it sprang, and if

possible to go beyond it in the intellectual race. If I am asked what kind of knowledge I would cultivate here, my answer is, first give your civilization a base co-extensive with the Province, and let, if you choose, its apex pierce the highest heaven of imagination and art. Start with the proposition, that every child shall have the rudiments of education – that from Cape North to Cape Sable, there shall not be a family beyond the reach of common schools; not a child who is not acquainted with reading, writing and arithmetic . . . make education co-extensive with the population, give the people a high position, and then they will exert an influence on all surrounding countries. . . . Are any so careless of the character of the whole people as not to give them all the advantages which they ought to possess?

(Speech of March 22, 1841, *Novascotian*, March 25 and April 1, 1841, or Chisholm [ed.] *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* [Halifax: 2 vols., 1909], I, 372-75)

4. AS CRITIC OF IDLENESS AND EXTRAVAGANCE

~ Although Howe is generally pictured as a *bon vivant*, his attitude toward idleness and extravagance in the early years was almost puritanical. Such weaknesses, he felt, might prevent Nova Scotia from developing to the extent that its resources warranted. He revealed his first apprehensions on this score during his "Rambles" throughout the western counties in 1828; he repeated them even more strongly during a time of economic recession in 1834. ~

Idleness cannot be charged on our whole population – this would be unjust, but certain it is that in our western counties, it is by far too general. . . . Few labour as assiduously as they could, or derive from their land as much as it might be made to yield; . . . almost all expend more for importations, either for personal or household decorations, or administer to the profusion of their tables, than is consistent with the dignity and character of the Farmer. I say dignity, for of all employments on the face of the earth there is none which lifts a man above the industrious and independent cultivator of the soil. . . .

But see where the sun sinks to the west – and the Ploughman unyokes his cattle, and returns to his home; and just for the sake of variety let us go with him, and partake of his evening meal. It is as it should be – simple but substantial, the produce of his own farm. Not one article of his food has helped to swell the

Balance of Trade against the Province, or has paid a farthing of Duty into the Provincial Chest. There, take a bowl, man, and help yourself to milk, warm and rich from the cow; none of your slops of Bohea and Hyson; or if you must have tea, go and gather some leaves from the hill side and the good woman will make some for you; but as to bringing a weed from China to fatten a Ploughman in Nova Scotia, there never was a more confounded humbug. . . .

Only look at the fat and happy faces around you; Plenty has set its broad arrow on every member of the family and why? Because Industry and Frugality preside over all; because they scorn to be indebted to other lands for food and clothes that can be created at home. . . .

The poisoned shirt of Dejanira was not more pernicious to Hercules, than are the frippery trappings of affected gentility to our Agricultural population; who, with a virtuous reliance on their own character and importance, should be too proud to wear them. Would they not laugh to see the Eagle, casting off the plumage on which he had cloven the air and gazed on the sun, to array himself in the gaudy feathers of the Peacock, when such a change would sink the brave Bird to earth, never again to rise? And how can they covet what lowers them from the elevation of independent yeomen, to the galling servitude of country Traders, and the long train of legal cormorants, who live by the extravagance of the Farmer? But in this cottage there is none of it; the thrifty wife by whom we sit would not change the sweet scene before her . . . for the ominous gatherings of village gossips with their ribbons and caps, and tawdry ornaments . . . for which their husbands' names are standing on the wrong side of some merchant's Ledger. . . . What is it to her if Mrs. Turnip's cow has calved, or Mrs. Withrod has had twins, or Miss Broomstick has spoiled her new Bombazine, with currant stains, and all the other items of important intelligence which takes women away from their own firesides; which break in on these hours of sweet repose which labour claims for his reward, and wastes time, which should be devoted to the cultivation and improvement of the adult and the infant mind, in the trivial idleness and dissipation which destroy them.

(Western Rambles – No. 6, *Novascotian*, August 28, 1828)

We are of those who believe that many of the evils we are now enduring are of our own creating, and are to be attributed

to the false tone which pervades our society, and to the extravagant habits of the people. . . .

Nova Scotia is an excellent poor man's country, because almost any man, in any walk of industry, by perseverance and economy, can secure the comforts of life. . . . In this Province, "Gentlemen Farmers," "Gentlemen Merchants" and "Gentlemen Mechanics," . . . cannot as a class exist; we must all be "working men," if we wish to succeed. . . . Throughout this Province, however, and in this town particularly, these homely truths have been too frequently forgotten. . . . Our "Merchants," like those of Tyre, would fain be "Princes," our Mechanics and Farmers be gentlemen, while a "profession" has too often been supposed to add licence to plunder, and to give dignity to idleness, poverty, and profusion. . . . For the present let us confine our attention to the capital, as the great fountain head from which the tide of extravagance flows. . . .

We by no means wish to undervalue the benefits which Halifax derives from the expenditures of the British and local Governments . . . but the whole tendency of military society in a town like this is towards habits of idleness, dissipation and expense. We have colonels, majors, captains, and subalterns – all having fixed incomes provided by the crown – many of them gentlemen of fortune, and polished manners. . . . If our population would be content to borrow only what was estimable, to copy only what was worthy of imitation, we might derive from it a great deal of good and but very little harm. But unfortunately we are all more prone to copy each other's vices than virtues; and too many of our young men, without acquiring the grace and polish of their Garrison associates, have learned their disregard of time, their habits of expense, and their contempt for the low pursuits of business. . . .

But the Garrison must not bear all the blame. The high salaries which nearly all the officers of the Provincial Government enjoy, besides taxing the productive industry of the country too much, operate most injuriously upon the whole tone of society in this town. If an office of any kind is to be given away, the most mean and insignificant, there are a dozen applicants in an hour. . . . Now what does that prove? Why, that compared with the other walks of life, men of all ranks can get *more money* with *less* labour and anxiety, by getting an office, than by treading the sober paths of economy and industry, and the direct tendency of such a disproportion is to weaken the springs of

exertion – to palliate the sin of idleness, and to beget a spirit of time serving and dependance. . . .

[Thus in Halifax] the industrious classes are assailed by temptations on every side. They are called upon to associate, not only with the gentlemen of the army, but with their overpaid Provincial officers, and most at whatever hazard of embarrassment and bankruptcy, emulate their expenditure, and live in the same style. Thus it is, that every pound of salary which is paid beyond what the country can fairly afford, reacts upon the people who pay it, and tends to diminish their capital, and weaken their independence.

(State of the Province – No. 3, *Novascotian*, July 31, 1834)

Perhaps there is no country in the world, where farmers, as a class, ought to be more independent; and yet with some honourable exceptions, as a class, they are never out of debt. . . .

Between the town and the interior there is constant intercourse and mutual action and reaction. In each village there is a little knot of traders, lawyers, and public officers, through whom the fashionable follies of the capital are reflected upon the surrounding country. . . . The farmer throws away his homespun whenever he comes into the village, and is ready to apologize to every man he meets if he is not as well dressed as the best of the inhabitants. . . . In many cases, where the farmer himself has a mind too strong to be swayed by these temptations, his wife, his sons and his daughters, find them irresistible . . . and think they have as much right to wear broad cloth as cousin Bob, who is perhaps a shop boy or a clerk in a lawyer's office; and the young girls must have as many good bonnets, broad ribbons and fine flounces, as are sported by the ladies of the village, or the fashionables from town. . . .

The ruinous credit system by which much of the country trade is carried on, enables the farmer's family to slide insensibly into extravagance. . . . The farmer or his family go to the country places, and purchase whenever they please; in too many cases thinking as much of the day of payment as they do of the day on which our final accounts are to be settled, the one seeming almost as distant as the other. . . .

. . . . .

Let [the women] take the matter in hand, and allow no superfluous article to enter their dwellings until their family debts are paid – and let them act upon the principle that every skirt full of

furbelows and head full of ribbons and flowers, that have not been paid for, instead of being ornaments are badges of disgrace. Let them think of the example of Cornelia, who, when pressed by the vain Campanian Lady to display her jewels, presented her sons, in simple attire but enriched with every manly virtue, and enjoyed the triumph of maternal propriety and conscious elevation of soul, which the world and the follies thereof could neither give nor take away.

(State of the Province – No. 4, *Novascotian*, August 21, 1834)

5. THE LOYAL NOVA SCOTIAN AND BRITON

~ None was more loyal than Howe to Nova Scotia and to Britain, and their detractors were certain to be denounced vigorously in the *Novascotian*. ~

Our Own Country – When wearied with the toils and perplexities of business, or disgusted with the follies of those with whom it is his duty to mingle, Man seeks for tranquillity and joy in the calm retirement of his home; and the Sea Bird, whose wing has for hours battled with the blast, and whose breast has been buffeted by a thousand waves, retires to its nest among the rocks, and while tasting of the peaceful pleasures which it yields, feels happy that the storm, however fiercely it may murmur in the distance, cannot disturb the serenity of its retreat. With feelings such as these we often delight to withdraw our mind from all the world beside, and allow it to rest and refresh while contemplating the advancement of our native land, and the security and happiness it yields. . . .

We are not ashamed to contrast our little Province with any portion of the same extent in the great republic by our side. In wealth we may [be] surpassed. In the old States, where a permanent and efficient system of Education has been steadily pursued, we may be, and doubtless are, outstripped in intelligence. These are the fruits of time. . . . But what section of the Union is richer in all the great essentials to individual and collective happiness? Have they more of the real solid comforts of life, fewer taxes to curtail them, laws which form a more impenetrable bulwark of security, a government which sits lighter on the people, or under which they may enjoy more of rational freedom? . . .

We have no wish to represent Nova Scotia as a second El Dorado, whose streets are paved with gold; or a land flowing

with milk and honey, where nothing is wanting but an appetite. We have our occasional grievances, cares and anxieties, like all the world besides, but they are the necessary alloys of life. They are felt on the Alps and on the Andes, by the margin of the glassy Rhine, and the flowery borders of the Mississippi, and why should we be exempt?

(*Novascotian*, January 17, 1828)

Cobbett and the Colonies – William Cobbett is certainly one of the wonders of this wonderful age. Possessing talents of a high order, and industry rarely equalled, he appears to squander his powers on a succession of violent prejudices, which seem to bend a mind of great apparent strength with an ease and facility, that are surprising. . . . His shameless disregard of truth, his want of fixed principles to govern his public conduct, his glaring inconsistencies, would have made shipwreck of even a more commanding genius. As though he were conscious that reformation would now be of little avail, he rushes on with renewed violence, scattering his incoherencies with the zeal of a bigot, and the eccentricity of a madman. An article in a late number of his Register is devoted to the patriotic task of dissuading the people of Great Britain from emigrating to the North American Colonies, which he characterizes as a barren desert – a howling wilderness, where sterility is the parent of starvation.

. . . Nova Scotia consists of heaps of rocks, covered with firtrees for the greater part, with a few narrow strips of clear land on the bottoms of the valleys. . . . Everywhere the snow covers the ground for several feet deep six months in the year. So poor are these countries, that garden stuff and fruit, even cabbages, are carried from the United States by sea, to be eaten by the governors, officers of the army, and other gentle folks, who are paid out of the taxes raised on us. . . .

Old Cobbett perhaps is ignorant that thousands of bushels of Corn, such as he is trying to ripen in his garden in England, are grown every year on the worst lands of the bleak and barren North American Colonies.

(*Novascotian*, September 29, 1831)

There are other grounds of attachment to England, besides a direct descent from those who have been born upon her soil, or those who have suffered expatriation in her cause. Though the blood of Britons flows in our veins, that would be of little con-

sequence, if every thing else did not conspire to keep their spirit alive in our bosoms. The language which we speak, like a noble stream, has come rolling onwards from the days of the Saxon Heptarchy down to the present time, becoming in every age more pure and more expressive, bearing along the treasures of mighty minds, and sparkling with the corruscations of genius. Of that stream we are taught to drink from our childhood upwards; and in every draught there is a magic influence, turning our thoughts and our affections to the hallowed function from which it sprung. For cultivated and enlarged views – for the truths of natural, moral and political science, we are indebted, in an eminent degree to the Statesmen and Philosophers of Britain. Our souls are stirred by the impassioned eloquence of her Orators, and our feelings and tastes are refined by the high inspiration of her Poets. Nor does any servile feeling mix with our participation of these treasures. They are a free gift from the founders of the British Empire – and the fathers of British Literature, Science and Song – to the children of that Empire, and the inheritors of that language, wherever their lot may be cast. They are as much the property of a Briton by the banks of the Avon, the Hillsborough, or the St. John, as by the Liffey, the Tweed, or the Thames. . . . Is it possible that any subject of the British Empire, that any member of that mighty whole, can be at a loss for matter of gratification and of pride? . . . For ages has Britain stood like a beacon light upon the borders of the old world, luring the nations to wealth, intelligence and freedom. . . . Advancing onwards by the guidance of her example, one after another the nations are breaking their yokes upon the heads of their task masters, and asserting those rights, the knowledge and the advantages of which have been taught them by the example of England. Then is it from the fellowship of such a nation as this that we are to go in search of a more honourable Union? Are we to fly to the United States for food for our pride, or for objects and associations, around which our sympathies and feelings can cling? Must we needs turn Republicans, because our forefathers have left us no valuable inheritance, no imperishable monuments of glory? . . .

Be assured, that long after [the alarmists] have gone to their accounts, and faded from this transitory scene – nay, after hundreds of similar sages have disturbed its counsels, and stood in the way of its advancement – Nova Scotia will be still holding on her course, by the side of her illustrious parent, with a purer

spirit of loyalty animating the hearts of her population, than is now "dreamt of in the philosophy" of the men by whom her character is slandered.

(England and Her Colonies, *Novascotian*, November 11, 1830)

6. AN ANTI-PARTY MAN

~ The young Howe equated party with faction; the only party to which he cared to belong was "the party of Nova Scotia." He was therefore highly indignant in 1828 when Jotham Blanchard, king-pin of the Pictou Scribblers, published a letter in the *Canadian Spectator* of Montreal alleging that "the *Acadian* is conducted by a young man connected with the Post Office, and, of course, tied to a party." His reaction was equally vigorous when Senex, writing in the *Acadian Recorder* during the currency crisis of 1834, accused him of having "lent himself to a party, bent on securing their own interest at the expense of the public." ~

To the "Acadian of 1827" we can refer with feelings of pride – young as we were, and depending wholly on the energies of our mind for its support. . . . The gratuitous and slanderous conclusion, that, because we were connected with an office we must be tied to a party, shews that the slave cannot understand real independence of mind. . . . Burns was an Excise Officer – to what party did he belong? Franklin was Postmaster-General – did he forget the public welfare? and have not hundreds of the great and the good, the virtuous and the noble, been employed, at some period of their lives, in offices of the Government, but did it follow, "of course," that their minds and their opinions were not as free as the air they breathed? . . .

But now, it seems, that we are unconnected with any office – that we could gain nothing by servility, and have every right to lose, forsooth we must be linked to a party still, because we express our disgust at a production in which the whole Press of the country, our own included, was charged with servility – the Legislature libelled. . . . But [we] have full confidence that, when he has collected all the facts he can muster, and embellished them with all the innuendoes he can weave, the public will turn from him in disgust, exclaiming with Pindar's Sir Joseph "Fleas are not Lobsters, d—— their souls."

(*Novascotian*, May 8, 1828)

For fear Senex or any body else, may in future mistake the party to which we belong, we may once for all inform him, that it is made up of the independent and intelligent throughout the country, who are neither ashamed nor afraid to maintain sound principles, and promote the public good, even at the risk of personal injury and inconvenience; and who will neither suffer themselves to be ground down beneath the great wheel of state, nor any of the wheels within wheels by which its movements may sometimes be encumbered. Of this party we have never been ashamed, and as every day is adding to its numbers and its influence, there is little danger that we, who adhered to it when it was comparatively weak, shall desert it now that it has become strong. The policy of this party has always been to ask for nothing but what was right – and to submit to nothing wrong.
(*Novascotian*, July 17, 1834)

7. A MILD TORY

~ The early Howe might with some accuracy be labelled a "mild Tory." In the prospectus of the *Novascotian* he stood for "the Constitution, the *whole* Constitution, and *nothing but* the Constitution"; consequently he opposed any radical disturbance of the existing institutions. More particularly, he resisted Thomas Chandler Haliburton's proposal to deprive the Council of the right to control individual appropriations or to amend money bills; he also maintained that any defects in the Council and the Assembly were minor and easily righted. ~

There never was a country where one man, or a dozen men (if he or they were so disposed) could do so little mischief, a malicious print meet with so disheartening a reception, or an unsound doctrine be sooner brought to its proper level by the correct judgement of those whom it was intended to mislead. . . .

This country is so young that few old prejudices and animosities have descended from father to son, as they do in older societies. The main body of the people have had to hew their own little fortunes out of the wilderness; and when a man has gone into the woods, with hardly any thing but his axe, and has cut down the trees and reared a comfortable home, he has been so much accustomed to depend upon his own resources, that he insensibly acquires a habit of *thinking for himself*, on almost every subject presented to his view. He receives the ipse dixit of no man without examination, and builds up his political

opinions as he built his fortune, in his own way, and by the operations of his own mind. . . .

We like at all times to draw our reasons from the actual condition of our own affairs, and never travel out of the Province for an argument that we can find at home; and we put it to any man who has marked the proceedings of the Assembly for a single Session, whether he would like to see the whole funds of the Province placed at its exclusive and uncontroulled disposal. . . . We will venture to say, that if the existing check was removed, the Appropriations for Roads and Bridges would, before the expiration of three years, engross nearly the whole of the Revenue; instead of £20,000, the vote would ere long increase to thirty or forty thousand. . . . Even now, with the Council's controul before their eyes . . . votes are frequently proposed and carried, which we have no hesitation in saying reflect disgrace upon the movers. Hundreds of pounds are granted to clear a few sticks or stumps from a rivulet, or to make a road, when, as a witty member last year observed, they ought also to try and *make a passenger*. When we call to mind the turbulence, and we may say ludicrous and disgraceful picture, which the House invariably presents while Members are dividing the Road Vote among the different counties – a matter with which the Council never interferes; and when we reflect that if the whole Revenue of the Province were thrown into the scramble, this scene of jarring and discontent, and cupidity, would extend throughout the Session, we think no rational man can for a moment desire a change. . . .

It is in vain to say that a power to reject the whole Bill of Appropriation, would be amply sufficient – we may venture to assert that a single session would not pass without the whole labours of the Legislature being in danger of meeting a mortifying and embarrassing conclusion, from the exercise of this mischievous semblance of controul. . . . Now the Council examines each resolution by itself; if one is rejected it does not endanger the rest, and although some public interest may occasionally suffer, the general concerns of the Province are not injured in consequence. . . .

No man will dispute: our Council, taken as a Body, comprises no ordinary share of talent; some of its Members are as able men as are to be found in any of the Colonies, and we cannot but add our testimony to the general purity of their intentions. . . . [But] those feelings which are inseparable from

human nature no doubt act upon them as they do on the Members of Assembly; and we should be as sorry to see the whole government of the country placed in their hands, as to commit the purse of the Province to the mercy of popular extravagance. The safety of the People depends on their placing as little power to do evil in the hands of either as the practical business of the country will allow; and we contend that not a tythe of the mischief results from the controul the Council at present exercise, compared with what would flow from the removal of the ancient landmarks. . . .

If the Council, from their offices, and their intercourse with the Executive, possess any influence which is foreign to their characters as Legislators, the Assembly, from being the organ of the People's voice – the champions of their rights – the depositories of their confidence, have a power over public opinion which the Council can never enjoy; and can at all times mould and direct it in such a manner as to exercise an influence over the proceedings of the Upper House, which, although it may not be recognized by its members, does in reality exist, and more than counterbalances the undue power which they are supposed to possess. While the People are true to themselves, while they make judicious selections of their representatives; and while they keep a vigilant watch over the proceedings of both Branches, no evil can result from the present system, which, either in its direct operation or ulterior consequence, would justify a change.

(*Novascotian*, May 15, 1828)

We are not of the number of those who attempt to trace more evils than ever sprung from the Box of Pandora, to the defects of our Council, and the general policy of its members. . . . We unhesitatingly declare, that fewer traces of oppression and bad government are no where to be discerned than within the limits of Nova Scotia, and that a more contented and happy population is not to be found within the wide circle of the British Dominions. . . .

[Nevertheless] we ought not to shut our eyes to such defects as are observable in the theory or practical operation of our Institutions. . . .

That the present structure of His Majesty's Council is unconstitutional and defective, we think very few will dispute; and it is for the country to consider what alterations may be

necessary, and the simplest and least objectionable mode by which these may be attained. . . .

Public officers *of all kinds* and particularly the heads of extensive and influential departments, should be withdrawn as much as possible from the business of legislation [and hence from the Council]; because they would then be entirely removed from all party squabbles, and the otherwise unavoidable influence of party feelings. Instead of possessing any power to obstruct public enquiry wherever it might be deemed necessary, they would be subject to the wholesome controul of both branches of the legislature, either of which could at any time enquire into the correctness of their proceedings without any appearance of indelicacy towards the other; and their attention would be more exclusively confined to the business of their departments, the patronage of which would be more liable to a liberal and useful distribution. . . .

[The] continuance [of judges] at a Board which forms an important Branch of the Legislature is unconstitutional, and opposed to the whole spirit of our institutions . . . [they] should be as far as possible removed from every species of temptation to error, and every description of bias; and ought to be placed far above and beyond the clamour of legislative discord, and the influence of political intrigue. . . . Another blemish in our Council is the presence of an ecclesiastic, who, though possessed of fine talents, would be more scripturally employed in attending to the duties and obligations of his Church, than in mixing in the business of Legislation. . . .

[Then there] is the propriety of admitting the public to the debates of the Council, when employed in a Legislative capacity. . . . Ancient usage is the only argument that can be urged in support of the present system of exclusion, and we think it is full time it was abandoned. What would be thought of the British House of Peers, if all the discussions were conducted with the secrecy of the Inquisition? What would our neighbours say to the adoption of a similar practice by their Senates?

(Legislative Review – No. 11, *Novascotian*, January 21, 1830)

The leading feature of our House of Assembly is the formidable array of lawyers by whom its benches are lined. . . .

Whatever may have been their faults, imperfections and errors, our lawyers have been at all times the ablest defenders of popular rights, the most active and intelligent illustrators of

political questions; . . . we are, nevertheless, decidedly of opinion, that the number of lawyers in our Representative body is out of proportion to its general structure, and should be reduced: for these plain reasons – that in an Assembly which ought to represent the various interests and opinions of the whole population, no order or class in the country should be allowed too great a preponderance; the whole should be so organized as to preserve, if possible, such a balance of power as would give no undue influence to any set of men, or afford them, should they desire it, an impunity for selfish or partial legislation. . . .

Let [the people] therefore reduce the present number [of lawyers] within narrower limits; and bring it into a more rational proportion with the other classes of which our representation is composed.

(Legislative Review – No. 12, *Novascotian*, January 28, 1830)

8. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE COUNCIL

~ By 1830 Howe's attitude toward the Council had hardened. He was appalled that it would dare to bring the entire business of the Legislature to a halt, as it did in rejecting the Assembly's attempt to correct an error in a revenue law by laying an additional duty of 4d. a gallon upon brandy. He had also become convinced that the Council, constituted as it was, would never "reduce one salary or abolish one useless office." ~

If we have altered our opinion of the wisdom, the prudence, or the patriotism of that Body, their own acts have produced the change. . . . We once inclined to the belief that the influence which His Majesty's Council enjoyed, from the possession of office, from the intercourse with and controul upon the Governor, in their executive capacity, was only a sufficient counterbalance for the controul which the Assembly held over the sympathies of the people. . . . But unfortunately the sympathies of the people cannot always be brought to bear upon matters of minor importance; and therefore, while the patronage, the power and the influence of the Council, are daily and hourly at work in support of their own measures and opinions, that which we considered a useful set off cannot always be relied upon as a sufficient counteraction. . . . A remedy for these defects must be found in a remodelling of the Council; in the exclusion of

public officers from its Board; and the separation of its executive and legislative powers, which now give to it a character as incongruous as it is overwhelming. . . .

All governments are or ought to be adapted to the promotion of the happiness of the people for whose benefit they are reared – and the great advantage which the constitution of England is supposed to enjoy over the other systems of Europe, is that while it ensures permanence and stability . . . the checks and counterchecks by which the whole is maintained, are so nicely balanced and adjusted, that the love of power, and the disposition to abuse it when the abuse is followed by no certain retribution, are kept down and controlled by the influence which each Branch of the government exercises upon the conduct of the others. That control, even in the British Government, is inadequate. . . . Such being the results of all history and experience, it is for us to take care, that the government which is to grow up with this growing country, contains as many checks upon the conduct of its rulers as are compatible with the freedom of legislation, and the energy of executive power. . . .

It has been said that the house have usurped the power to nominate commissioners of Roads; and right glad are we that they have because, in nine case out of ten, they are the best men by whom the service can be performed. . . .

But let us see if the Upper House possesses no patronage and power to bring to the aid of their legislation, whether right or wrong? . . . Have they not the whole patronage of the Bench and the Bar? . . .

The whole patronage of the Customs and Excise, two extensive and influential branches of the public service, are [also] vested in His Majesty's Council; . . . when we add the patronage of the Treasury, the Land Department, the Church, the selection of Magistrates, with the numberless other appointments which are at their disposal, we think we have a fair set off to the humble privilege of nominating Commissioners of Roads; and when we consider that all this power is blended with the privileges of a distinct Branch of the Legislature, and may be brought to bear upon the public mind in such a way as to bolster up acts the most absurd; when we reflect that with such an amount of patronage, it is morally impossible that the Council should ever be without a body of partizans to support and defend its measures, it brings home to our hearts a desire to give to the Country

a Legislative Council of a character less mixed, incongruous and questionable. . . .

We have here twelve men, who can jeopardize the peace, and destroy the Revenue of the Country; who can abruptly break up the consideration of the public business, and inflict evils of a nature so multifarious and extensive as to require the passage of years to repair; and yet, can turn round and shift the responsibility from their own shoulder, and by forcing a dissolution, add to the other boons which they have so graciously conferred – the distractions and tumults of a general election.

(The Revenue Dispute – No. 1, *Novascotian*, May 20, 1830)

Now, had we had a legislative council, in which public officers held no seats, some of these affairs would have been managed differently; because, in all matters where salaries were to be voted or services rewarded both branches would have co-operated with, or associated the views of the other; or, peradventure, if a party in the House had determined upon the creation of two or three useless offices the Council, having no strong professional bias, nor any right of nomination to these offices, would have crushed the design in the bud. But this brings us back to the good old British notion of responsibility; and impresses us more strongly than ever with the conviction that political pleuralities are scarcely less pernicious than religious ones. We are taught by this review, that we are to entrust as little power to do evil to the Council as to the House, because the great principles of human nature operate as invincibly in one end of a stone building as in the other; making men very watchful and patriotic in matters which only concern the public, but singularly indulgent to measures which deeply concern themselves.

(The Revenue Dispute – No. 2, *Novascotian*, May 27, 1830)

9. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE ASSEMBLY

~ By 1833 Howe was having his first doubts about the Assembly as well. He kept reminding its members that the real issue in the election of 1830 was not merely a duty of 4d. a gallon upon brandy, but the reform of the basic structure of the Council. ~

The people say, you implored us to examine the structure of the Council, and to protect ourselves and you against the dangers to be apprehended from its great, incongruous, and irre-

sponsible powers. We responded to your call; we acknowledged those defects, we estimated the danger, and we sent you back solemnly to deliberate, and wisely to decide – but you have done neither. Though some of you were on this point steeped to the lips in pledges, you have moved no resolution, offered no address, provoked no debate; but, like the Gladiator of old, have become suddenly awed by or enamored of the monster we sent you to slay.

(Legislative Review – No. 1, *Novascotian*, October 31, 1833)

The Council has been somewhat changed in spirit if not in form. . . . There have been fewer attempts at dictation – less of interference with the appropriations – and no efforts to controul the supplies. Lulled to forgetfulness by this change of tone, some may imagine a change of structure unnecessary. But who would build his house in the bed of a river, because for a time it was dry? who would sleep by Vesuvius, merely because some former explosion had for the moment abated its force?

(Legislative Review – No. 2, *Novascotian*, November 28, 1833)

~ But it was the currency issue which first gave Howe a real insight into the working of Nova Scotia government. The Halifax Banking Company, which had been formed without legislative sanction in 1825, was not required to redeem its own notes in specie, although it frequently did so. When the Bank of Nova Scotia was incorporated by statute in 1832, Howe welcomed it as a means of dividing the monied influence. But he was highly indignant when the Legislature, on the Council's insistence, required the new bank to redeem its notes in specie. To him it was outrageous that the five councillors who were directors of the Halifax Banking Company could thus subvert the legislative process in their own interest. The new bank soon had its innings. By encouraging a run on the Halifax Bank, it forced the latter to suspend the redemption of its notes. The result was a badly depreciated currency and an intensification of the prevailing business recession. In 1833 the Assembly tried to make both banks return to cash payments, but it was baulked by the Council. The handful of assemblymen who remained at the end of the session eventually accepted a solution which Howe called disgraceful; they permitted both banks to issue non-redeemable paper. Throughout these proceedings the inconsistency and double-dealing of assemblymen whom he had heretofore trusted amazed and appalled Howe. ~

[The Assembly] is certainly an admirable school to teach one the folly of consistency, and the value to be placed on the doctrine of chances. We might almost compare the labourers in these currency debates to those in the tower of Babel, who stared with astonishment to hear themselves and their neighbours talking in tongues so different from their natural language . . . who could bear without a smile [Jotham Blanchard's] indignant denial that any influence from without was exercised upon Members of the Assembly, when he well knew there were some who were moved like puppets by the wires from the other end of the building – and that in no two Sessions had the ancient system of feasting and drenching with Champagne, which was once abhor[r]ent to his feelings and denounced by his pen, been carried to such an extent. . . . Midas, by his magic touch, turned every thing to gold. [Our Bankers and Legislators] with a stroke of the pen turned every thing to paper. The Titan boasted, in his fetters, that he had taught man the use of the precious metals, our senators aimed at a higher feat when they resolved to teach us to do without them. . . .

Members should come prepared for every obstacle, and for every possible state of things; and they ought to be instructed to restore the currency to a just and sound condition, *though they should have to sit till mid summer, and even though another year's revenue should be the necessary sacrifice*. . . .

But the country members may say, with some show of reason, suppose we do this year as we did the last – prepare a Bill, with great labour, and in a spirit of equity, and send it to His Majesty's Council, and it comes down to us rejected at the eleventh hour – what are we to do then? *Resolve yourself into a committee on the General State of the Province*, and (having seen that no Member has had leave to return home) . . . send to the foot of the Throne a full statement of the situation of the country, the structure of the Council, and the difficulties under which the Representative Body labours in legislating for the public good; and pray His Majesty to make such a change as will enable the people to enjoy the benefits of a sound and wholesome currency, and ensure to themselves such a participation in their own government, as, by the British Constitution under which they live, they are entitled to demand.

(Legislative Review – No. 4, *Novascotian*, December 12, 1833)

~ Howe concluded that reforms in the system of representation

and in the method of conducting elections were needed to secure a more representative Assembly. ~

In a Province where the people possess no control over one entire Branch of the Legislature, it behoves them to see that the right of election to that in which they have influence . . . [is] wisely and fairly divided; and above all, that the mode of election is such as shall protect them from combinations among the members themselves, or from the undue preponderance of monied or political power in the hands of a few. . . .

We have often been struck with the spirit of temporizing, and sacrifice to expediency, that prevails in our Assembly. . . . Members seem to shrink from the advocacy of what they fear they cannot carry. They strive to shape their camels so as to pass them through the needle's eye; or rather, like the Russian woman, they throw one babe after another to the wolves, until what remains is no longer worth preserving. . . .

[The present system of representation] is neither fair nor satisfactory. From the summit of College Hill in Hants County, a man may see the finest parts of the townships of Windsor, Falmouth and Newport, and if he be disposed to mount his horse, he may in a week ride over almost every road and bridge in the three, and converse with a third of the population. In three weeks of the fifty-two, he may, to a certainty, acquire as much local information as will qualify him to represent the whole, nearly, if not quite as well, as either of these townships are or need be represented. . . . Upon what principle can it be pretended, that Granville, Annapolis and Digby, besides their share in the county elections, should also have township members, while Wilmot, Sissiboo and Clare, scarcely, if at all inferior to them, should have no such privilege?

(Legislative Review – No. 5, *Novascotian*, January 2, 1834)

How can we look for a pure and incorruptible Assembly, when a large proportion of members are chosen by dint of practices the most nefarious and disgraceful. Need we refer to the murders of Pictou and Arichat, the lawless mob dominion by which the Hustings at Halifax, and other places have often been distinguished; or to the opposing hosts of Cheticamp, where the pulling of a single trigger, would have been the signal for a pitched battle, and perhaps an indiscriminate slaughter? Shall we conjure up before the imaginations of our readers the gangs of ruffians, by whom the right of election, has been from

time to time visited in every county of the Province. . . . We have seen persons of otherwise unexceptionable character, and who on ordinary occasions, would not depart from the strictest principles of honour, practise at elections the most palpable frauds, the lowest and most humiliating tricks, to obtain votes for their favourite candidate. . . . Is this the freedom of election – is representation the foundation or corner stone of British liberty? . . .

[What is the remedy?] Only let the Ballot be introduced, and the same order and decorum which prevails at all respectable societies where it has been for years advantageously employed, will distinguish a general election. The opinions of the people will flow fairly into the urns whatever may be the obstructions opposed to their course; wealth will have only its fair and legitimate influence, but the rich will possess no power to dictate to, and degrade or debauch the poor.

(*Novascotian*, January 16, 1834)

~ In 1834 Howe finally lost all patience with the Assembly when it appeared likely to accept a ridiculously extravagant establishment for the public officers and judges in return for the commutation of the quit rents. The British government, he said, ought to commute the quit rents unconditionally and rely on the good sense of the Legislature to do justice to the public servants. His protests helped to defeat the proposals, but he became indignant again when the Colonial Office accused Nova Scotia of parsimony. ~

We have watched the five days debate upon the Judiciary and Civil List with deep attention, and have looked in vain for those honest views of *justice* and *economy*, which the *circumstances*, and *feelings*, and *prospects* of the country ought to prompt. From all that we have yet heard, we are persuaded that if the Civil List and the Judiciary are arranged on the *profuse*, and *unsound*, and *impolitic* principles, avowed by gentlemen during the past week, there will be a feeling aroused throughout Nova Scotia, that will not readily subside; . . . we tell the House plainly, that if it chooses to lay its independence at the feet of a grasping and ambitious profession and the two or three interested persons, who, from behind the scenes, attune the wires upon which it plays such costly music, then is it unworthy of the Province, and the honour and confidence it has bestowed.

(*Novascotian*, March 20, 1834)

Before three weeks the same men who, nine months ago, meditated the most daring and selfish sacrifices of the interests entrusted to their care, will be again assembled, with not only the same disposition and the same power to do mischief, but fortified no doubt with as many threats and despatches from the Colonial Office, as the intrigues and correspondence of the past summer, may have produced. Now is the time, therefore, for the people to rise and determine, whether these men are their servants or their masters. . . . Now is the time to choose between a scale of remuneration to public officers founded on just and rational principles, and suited to the circumstances of the country; or one dictated by the cupidity of the interested. . . .

Will the people act on this occasion? Will they bury all local jealousies and disputes, and come forth as one man to the decision of this great question? We have rarely found them fail, when rightly informed, to do their duty – and God forbid that we should distrust them now. From every Township in the Province, a petition must be sent, in which the abortive attempts of the last session shall be characterized as they deserve. . . . Cunning hands will doubtless prepare another curiously compounded, but equally dangerous draught – and the most learned empirics in the whole faculty of politics and law, will endeavour to persuade us that it is necessary to our peace and safety that we should drain it to the dregs; and if we refuse, their only hope lies in forcing it down our throats. Will the country tamely submit to this outrage? Will the people wait until the poison is working in every vein, or will they, like Balthazer in the Honeymoon, by a display of foresight and energy, astonish the doctors, who seek for their own advantage, to endanger our constitution?

(*Novascotian*, November 13, 1834)

[What is the present state of Nova Scotia?] . . . We have been informed by persons of the best judgment and great practical experience, that £100 currency is the very highest sum cleared in a season, by the most affluent and successful farmers, throughout the length and breadth of the land. . . . There is not an Agriculturist in Nova Scotia who would not abandon his farm for a situation worth £500 per annum – there are not ten to whom £300 would not be a sufficient inducement; and . . . the great bulk of our farmers would give up all their prospects of a living to be assured of half the sum. Are these then the people by whom large salaries should be paid; are these the men

to saddle themselves forever with a costly array of officers, set in contrast to the moderate incomes by which their wants are supplied, and with which they are content? Is it possible that in an Assembly where these people are *represented*, men can be found having the effrontery to declare, that any office holder would be ill-treated if he did not receive a larger sum than the wealthiest farmer in the whole province can afford to spend?

(*Novascotian*, November 20, 1834)

The fact is plain – obvious – irresistible; where then was the foundation of a charge of parsimony? Could the Colonial Secretaries gather any thing from the appropriations, to justify their indecent interference – or excuse the scheme of wholesale public robbery, which, under denunciations of coercion was propounded in their name? . . .

And yet this is the Colony to which Lord Goderich and Mr. Stanley send despatches complaining of parsimony. . . .

We really cannot help pausing here, to enquire whether any British statesman, rightly informed, and having no interest in the matter, could, unless prompted by the selfishness, and teased by the solicitations of interested persons here, have made such ridiculous propositions.

(*Novascotian*, December 4, 1834)

10. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

~ Howe's understanding of the working of Nova Scotia government was completed in 1835. On January 1, the *Novascotian* published a letter signed "The People," which alleged grave offences against the Halifax magistracy. Its key sentences were: "I will venture to affirm, without the possibility of being contradicted by proof, that during the lapse of the last 30 years, the Magistracy and Police have, by one stratagem or other, taken from the pockets of the people, in over exactions, fines, etc. etc. a sum that would exceed in the gross amount £30,000. . . . Is it not known to every reflecting and observant man, whose business or curiosity has led him to take a view of the Municipal bustle of our Court of Sessions, that from the pockets of the poor and distressed at least £1,000 is drawn annually, and pocketed by men whose services the Country might well spare."

For printing this letter Howe was tried for libel. The law required that the publisher's intention should be judged solely

by the content of the printed matter, but even if Howe's statement of the doctrine of intention had been valid, it would not have justified the accusations against all who had held magisterial office over a thirty-year period. Chief Justice Halliburton permitted Howe the widest scope in his address to the jury, and both he and the Attorney-General were content simply to state the law and the facts as they saw them without offering strong opinions on the merits of the action. Howe pleaded his own case before the jury. ~

My Lords and Gentlemen of the Jury, – I entreat you to believe that no ostentatious desire for display has induced me to undertake the labour and responsibility of this defence. Unaccustomed as I am to the form of courts, and the rules of law, I would gladly have availed myself of professional aid; but I have felt that this cause ought to turn on no mere technicality or nice doctrine of law, but on those broad and simple principles of truth and justice to which an unpractised speaker may readily appeal, and which an impartial jury can as clearly comprehend. . . .

In the trial of indictment for libel . . . the defendant is not allowed to prove the truth of his publication. . . . But he has the privilege of explaining to the jury anything which may illustrate the motives and intentions by which he was influenced, to satisfy them, that so far from wishing to provoke a breach of the peace, so far from incurring the guilt of which he stands accused, that his motive was praiseworthy, his intentions honourable, and his act demanded by the circumstances in which he was placed. . . .

What interested or malicious motive could I have had? Gentlemen, I had none. . . . I had for those that are really estimable among [the magistrates] . . . the most unbounded respect. But this only extended to their private character. As magistrates, having the guardianship of morals and the public peace; as the legislators of the county; the collectors and dispensers of its revenues; the trustees of its property; the auditors of its accounts; the almoners of its establishments, I know them, as you know them – as almost every man in the community knows them – to be the most negligent and imbecile, if not the most reprehensible body, that ever mismanaged a people's affairs. . . . They may expect much from the result of this trial;

but before I have done with them, I hope to convince them that they, and not I, are the real criminals here.

[Howe then presented the concrete evidence of maladministration, followed by his conclusions.] Now, gentlemen, upon a calm survey of this case, as I have put it before you, can you, under that indictment, find me guilty of a malicious libel? When you have examined the hardship, inequality, and oppression of the assessments, the disposition of the fire taxes, the miserable but costly corruptions of the Bridewell and Poorhouse, the inefficiency of the police, the malpractices of the brick building, the delay of justice in the commissioners court, and the confusion of the accounts, instead of punishing me for what I have done, what would you have said if I had refused to do it? Would I not have betrayed your interests and the interests of the community and forfeited the character of my paper, if I had suppressed this letter? . . .

Which of you, in my situation, would have dared to do otherwise? If this doctrine of intention were not clearly recognized by the English law, and if the jury were not made the exclusive judges of the circumstances which influenced the accused, there would be no safety for the press, no freedom of discussion at all. God forbid that I should attempt to set the press above the law; society should tolerate no privileged class that are not amenable to it. . . . If, influenced by hatred and malice, I publish matter, the tendency of which is injurious, and which is justified by no public necessity, let me be punished with the utmost rigour of the law; but if, in pursuing my lawful calling, I seek the public good, even if I commit an error of judgment, I have a right to protection from a jury, and from a liberal construction of the law. . . .

I now put it to you, whether you will not, as an English jury would, take all the circumstances of the case into consideration to rebut the legal evidence of malice; and I ask you, if you will not extend to the press of your country the same rational protection which the British press enjoys? . . .

Will you, my countrymen, the descendants of these men; warmed by their blood; inheriting their language; and having the principles for which they struggled confided to your care, allow them to be violated in your hands? Will you permit the sacred fire of liberty, brought by your fathers from the venerable temples of Britain, to be quenched and trodden out on the simple altars they have raised? Your verdict will be the most

important in its consequences, ever delivered before this tribunal; and I conjure you to judge me by the principles of English law, and to leave an unshackled press as a legacy to your children. You remember the press in your hours of conviviality and mirth – oh! do not forget it in this its day of trial.

If for a moment I could fancy that your verdict would stain me with crime, cramp my resources by fines, and cast my body into prison, even then I would endeavour to seek elsewhere for consolation and support. Even then I would not desert my principles, nor abandon the path that the generous impulses of youth selected, and which my riper judgment sanctions and approves. I would toil on, and hope for better times – till the principles of British liberty and British law had become more generally diffused, and had forced their way into the hearts of my countrymen. In the mean time I would endeavour to guard their interests, to protect their liberties; and, while Providence lent me health and strength, the independence of the press should never be violated in my hands. Nor is there a living thing beneath my roof that would not aid me in this struggle: the wife who sits by my fireside; the children who play around my hearth; the orphan boys in my office, whom it is my pride and pleasure to instruct from day to day in the obligations they owe to their profession and their country, would never suffer the press to be wounded through my side. We would wear the coarsest raiment; we would eat the poorest food; and crawl at night into the veriest hovel in the land to rest our weary limbs, but with cheerful and undaunted hearts; and these jobbing justices should feel, that one frugal and united family could withstand their persecution, defy their power, and maintain the freedom of the press. Yes, gentlemen, come what will, while I live, Nova Scotia shall have the blessing of an open and unshackled press.

(*Novascotian*, March 12, 1835, or W. Annand [ed.], *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* [Boston: 2 vols., 1858], I, 21-68)

~ Howe's acquittal naturally elated him. It also resulted in the resignation of all the Halifax magistrates. But when William Sawers, whose reputation left much to be desired, became the new Custos of the County, Howe realized that no reformation in the institutions of local government was to be forthcoming. ~

The scene in the Court House beggars all description. It was crammed to overflowing, and as hot as a furnace. For six hours

and a quarter I defended myself and scourged my prosecutors, in a style that of course I was too busy to judge of, but which startled and astonished the multitude, who devoured every word like manna and what was better awed the Bench, scattered and confounded the prosecutors, and what was best of all convinced the Jury. . . . I was certain . . . that they could not get a verdict against me, for one old fellow in the box, cried like a child. . . .

The verdict is most important to all the Colonies, as it fixes principles of the highest value and had it gone the other way it would have taken twenty years to reverse it.

(*Howe Letters*, p. 11)

With a heart swelling with gratitude to the giver of all good . . . we announce to our numerous readers in the interior, and in the neighbouring Provinces, that the Press of Nova-Scotia is FREE. Its independence has been established, by the firmness and intelligence of twelve impartial men, on these rational and indestructible principles of reason and English Law, that our ancestors tried out and determined – and which, while they are amply sufficient to guard society against its abuse, are essential to the protection of this invaluable Institution.

(*Novascotian*, March 5, 1835)

Even if the Press had not spoken the opinion and wishes of the community . . . no power short of physical force could compell the people of Halifax . . . to receive as their Chief Magistrate a man, known to them only by his vices. But the Press shall not be silent. . . . If, when a patient people are half maddened by the grasping ambition of some members of an honourable profession, the very dregs of that profession are cast into offices of which the brightest ornaments of the metropolis might be proud, . . . to whom can the people look but to the press? They do look to it in this, as in other extremities, because they feel, that when such things occur, it is their only refuge from an utter disruption of all these ties by which security, respectability and peace, are usually preserved.

(*Novascotian*, April 30, 1835)

11. ON REFORM OF THE ASSEMBLY (1835-36)

~ From 1835 onward Howe kept enjoining his readers that the real remedy for Nova Scotian ills was to elect an Assembly which understood and appreciated the evils. He perceived a

somewhat healthier tone of public feeling in 1836, but nonetheless he kept advising the public what steps it should take to ensure the best possible candidates in the approaching general election. ~

For many years we have left the construction of the Representative Branch of our Government to chance, taking no pains to select and secure the services of men of talent and integrity. The purse-proud and aspiring merchant has been elected by his ledger, the noisy publican by his rum cask, the country trader by the ship he was building, the lawyer by his writs, and all classes more or less by a vile system of deception and chicane, backed by a profuse outpouring of bad rum and porter. From such an electoral system, what could we expect? If disinterested and patriotic legislation had resulted from Houses so formed, there must have been a miracle. Had we any right to look for any thing but what we have got – and what have we got? An Assembly, in which Lawyers lead, and for years have led, a time serving and obedient majority; an enormous public debt; nine judges, in a little Province which would be amply provided with five; revenue establishments that swallow up a third of all the duties they collect; a Council, in which one religious body is represented by one clergyman and seven lay members, and all the other sects and denominations by four; and which is nearly divided between public officers and bankers, in whose disinterested deliberations the people have but little confidence. . . .

Many of [the evils] have been created or suffered to exist by the supineness of the people; and so long as the people are supine, unreflecting, irresolute and unresisting – will they remain. . . . The first step towards improvement in public matters must be to secure, what we have not now, a really energetic and public spirited Assembly through which the sentiments of the Country can be brought to bear upon the rottenness of Denmark. . . . If we are asked, how is such a body to be had? we answer, by the freeholders of every township and county doing their duty to themselves and to each other. . . . Let them not wait till half a dozen candidates, as ignorant as horses or as wily as knaves . . . precipitate themselves upon them, and leave them, at the ninth hour, but a choice of evils. But let them assemble, and select the best men among them . . . and elect them free of expense. And let these distinctly understand why they were chosen – for what qualities and principles – and let them know and feel, that

whenever those principles are deserted, and those qualities abused, they will be spurned from the seat to which they have been honourably elected, and others chosen in their stead.

(Halifax and Its Prospects – No. 1, *Novascotian*, August 27, 1835)

It is well known to you all that as soon as a person gets immoderately rich in Halifax, or aspires to a seat in the Council, past experience teaches him that sympathy with the mass – patriotism and intellect are not the passports to that Board – that it is of little consequence what he carries in his head, provided he has a sufficiency in his pocket. So soon therefore, as a man fancies he has nearly enough, he begins to think what he shall do to render himself acceptable to those who are already in, and to the high officers of the Government. He knows, as we all know, that these persons have a direct interest in securing a majority in the Assembly, that they may not be disturbed in the quiet possession of power. . . . And what does he do? brings the whole influence which his wealth gives him to keep out all troublesome fellows that might give uneasiness to the men in power . . . by using the influence which wealth or an extensive business gives him with the Fishermen around the Shores; and, corrupting the poorer and less intelligent class of voters with bad rum and porter, he succeeds in effecting the object, and is usually rewarded for his pains. . . .

Lawyers will continue to rule the Assembly and public officers and Bankers to reign in the Council, till the people take their own affairs more into their own hands – until the middle class, which in all Countries should possess the power, as they usually do the industry and intelligence – that class which in our elections have been scarcely consulted at all, but which I now see gathered around me, make their voice heard, and assert their claims to influence the composition of the Legislature and the measures of the Government.

(*Novascotian*, November 26, 1835)

The tone of all the speakers in the Assembly this Session plainly shows, that the public opinion, so strongly aroused throughout the country, is beginning to act upon the House! . . . Even His Majesty's Council are beginning to trim their sails, to meet the breeze they cannot control. They have commenced printing their Journals and exchanging them with the House daily. They have not yet opened their doors – a measure which, year after year, we have urged and almost supplicated them to

adopt. But we tell them, in the name of that Country to which their secret legislation is a continued insult, that *open them they must*. In vain they struggle and contend. The growing intelligence of the people will soon wrest from them a right, which, if conceded a few years ago, would have been accepted as a boon.
(*Novascotian*, March 3, 1836)

There is one striking difference between all the appeals yet made through the Newspapers to the Constituency, and those which formerly came forth on similar occasions. Candidates used to commence a short card with a compliment, and end by a vague promise to behave well if elected. Now every man *states his principles* and calls attention to some matters of importance, by reference to which – and not to his mere personal claims – he conceives the Freeholders should decide. This is as it should be, and proves that the intelligence and public spirit of the people are in future to be taken into account.
(*Novascotian*, August 4, 1836)

We have endeavoured to seize all fitting occasions to lay before [the people] such facts and reasoning as would furnish materials for thought and reflection, create a virtuous and enlightened public sentiment, and eventually produce a harvest of reform. . . .

The opportunity for revision and reconstruction of the Assembly – for the expression of public sentiment through the constitutional channels – has again arrived, and the duty of the electors is plain. If they are unwilling that the Province shall be married to misrule and irresponsibility for seven years more, now is the time to "forbid the banns," or else they may "hereafter hold their peace." It is of little use to spend seven years in fault finding and acrimonious criticism, if they will not spend seven days in securing a House that shall truly represent them.
(*Novascotian*, October 20, 1836)

If, in other Countries, the right to return, by voluntary suffrage, an entire Branch of the Legislature be regarded as a great privilege – still more highly valued should it be by the people of Nova Scotia, for it is almost the only privilege they have. . . . In this town, for instance, the Governor may appoint two or three Magistrates, some of them the most worthless and incompetent to be found, who exercise very extensive power, for good or evil: levy taxes, purchase property, mismanage our Institutions, and do what seems right in their own eyes, and yet the

people have no means of redress. . . . A freeholder in Halifax has no voice in the *general* Government under which he lives, but *once in seven years*; by the local Government his wishes and opinions are *never consulted at all.* From end to end of Nova Scotia, there is not one office in the gift of the people but that of Member of the Assembly. They cannot choose a Health Warden, or a Fire-Warden or even a Scavenger. One hundred men may organize a Volunteer Militia Company, and may spend one thousand pounds of their own money in purchasing dresses and accoutrements; and, when they have done, they cannot choose an Officer, from the Captain down to a Corporal. . . .

Let the Freeholders in every Town and County be forthwith summoned to meet each other, by formal requisition to the Sheriff, in some public place, there to weigh the characters and claims of such persons as shall be named. Let there be no party meetings, called by little knots, for particular objects, but grave and unanimous assemblings of all those interested, who meet for the purpose of despatching, with courage and intelligence, a business in which the general character and prosperity of their common country is involved.

(*Novascotian*, October 27, 1836)

12. ELECTION TO THE ASSEMBLY

~ Howe had long been attracted to the Assembly, and rumours continued to circulate, particularly before a by-election in Halifax in 1835, that he would soon present himself as a candidate. ~

We love to hear the free and thrilling tone of debate ringing in our ears, and to mark the clash of minds stirred by astute discussion; we delight to listen to those bursts of oratory, and flashes of imagination, which display the rising genius of our country, and by their electric effect kindle up ardent and patriotic emotions; and more than all we would like to see the great interests of the country brought to a focus, and so examined and displayed as to enable us to judge of the effects of the past year upon them, and form an estimate of the probable results of that which is to come.

(*Novascotian*, February 5, 1829)

I was well aware that many persons friendly to my principles, were desirous that I should be put forward as a candidate . . . many wish it now and, as to my opponents, they have for years

attributed every act of my life, private or political, to a desire to get into the Assembly. I could not go out to shoot a Partridge in the woods, or catch a Trout in the streams, without being suspected of canvassing for the next election. But, gentlemen, I was not so anxious to be returned myself, as to see your system of election changed. . . . Gentlemen, it is of little consequence who you elect; the important point for you to decide is, whether the bulk of the Freeholders of this Township have the power of election at all. Let not a few wealthy individuals, and a few public officers, any longer controul your elections but, looking around upon the middling class, or upon all classes, select the person best qualified to serve you and put him in free of expense.

(*Novascotian*, November 26, 1835)

~ In November, 1835, Thomas Chandler Haliburton warned Howe about the perils of seeking and winning election to the Assembly, doubting whether by going there he would advance his own interest or influence. He thought the *Novascotian*, always enough on one side of politics, would be regarded as a party paper altogether. "I fear you will hurt it, and it will hurt you, like a gig that runs over a cow, it kills the animal and breaks the carriage. . . . [So] consider well, cipher like Slick, set down the advantages on one side, it will make a damn small column, and put the disadvantages on the other, and strike a balance."

Nevertheless, as Howe told his half-sister in 1837, he felt impelled to accept a nomination, partly from a sense of duty, and partly from the opportunity it might afford for self-development. ~

If you ask what I promise myself by all this risk and labor and battling – I answer, that owing a good deal to nature or Providence I ought to make some return – that conceiving certain improvements to be essential to the welfare of the country of my birth, I ought to strive to get them introduced – and being under great obligations to many thousands who have aided and protected me in my designs, I ought not to shrink from any sacrifice of time and labor to pay the debt. But to take a more narrow and selfish view – a seat in the House confers, particularly if one is calculated to take a lead, vast influence in any country – it gives hourly opportunities of doing good – enables you at times to serve your friends without prejudice to the public. But the great temptation to me – speaking personally

was, that it is an admirable school. As I got no regular education, I have always held to the wisdom of picking it up as we go along – circumstances teach one better than books – and to learn to reason and think and act with clearness and energy – a man should put himself into situations that compel him to do all these as often as possible. I calculate that constant collision and association with highly cultivated minds will be of service to my own – and that in time, by weighing and balancing your powers against the clever men of the country, you not only try out and determine what is in you, but make it more fit for use. If my mind gets better my business can't well get worse, for intellectual effort is at the foundation of the whole, and then I shall be more worthy of the esteem of the small circle of dear friends which I thank God I have never been without.

(*Howe Letters*, pp. 14-15)

~ Howe accepted a nomination for the county of Halifax at a meeting held on November 9, 1836. Although he realized that his decision might "for the next six . . . perhaps for the fifteen or twenty years to come . . . engross all the little leisure which my occupations afford," he felt he had no alternative if the movement for reform was to progress. ~

I am passing onward to the middle period of life – others there are in the Assembly, whose heads are silvered with age. Shall I grow old, and they descend into their graves, and leave to the next generation the redress of a grievance such as this? . . .

Has a single Salary been reduced? Are there not still some seven or eight public officers, paid out of all proportion to our means, whose emoluments exhaust the revenues and burthen the industry of the country. . . . The Press has done much in informing and arousing the people; but the conviction has slowly, yet steadily deepened over my mind, that all its efforts must be useless until a majority is formed in the Assembly, who will follow out a system of rational reform. If suitable materials for forming and combining that majority were more abundant, I should not have ventured out of the ordinary paths of my profession. . . . I do not despair of ultimate success . . . [but] I am not too sanguine about seeing a majority such as we want in the next Assembly. I know the difficulty of obtaining men of the right stamp, and the influences with which they will have to contend. . . . If a majority can not be had – and I fear the people are scarcely enough alive to their own interests – I shall be

content to battle in a minority for the next six years; to follow, where others are willing to lead; to lead, where they may fall short of what I think is required for the general good.

Many of my most valued and sincere friends look with anxiety upon the step which I am about to make. . . . I respect their opinions and their fears; but they cannot see the whole field of danger, and of duty, as it lies before my eye. . . . Other objections have been raised, by those who seem, on this occasion, to be for the first time most solicitous for my interests. It has been said, Oh! If Mr. Howe goes into that House, *The Novascotian* will lose its independence, he will not be able to write so freely, when he is a member of the Assembly. . . . Those who think that I shall fear to write, had better make some inroad upon the rights or interests of the people, and perhaps they may have cause to regret having hazarded the experiment. But others of these pretended friends, are very anxious about my worldly affairs – they are so fearful that Mr. Howe will "neglect his business" – will he? There is little danger; one who has been accustomed to labour from boyhood, who, beginning life without a shilling, has worked his way along in such a community as this, is not very likely to become suddenly negligent of his private affairs; and when I have heard the objection, coming from some of those who never did a day's work in their lives, I must confess that it makes me smile. . . .

[In case of failure in politics] I shall return to my books and spend the little leisure which business affords, with the Poets, Philosophers and Historians; who, as they delighted and informed my youth, I trust have a charm to cheer and solace my old age.

(*Novascotian*, November 17, 1836)

~ Before the poll opened at Musquodoboit on December 5, Howe outlined more clearly than before his concept of responsible government in a colony. Part of his speech illustrates, possible in an exaggerated form for the first time, the egotistical type of utterance which was, on occasion, to annoy friend and foe alike. ~

Let me turn your attention, Gentlemen, to . . . some of these great interests, against which I have had to maintain my political independence. Scarcely had I commenced my labours, when violent attacks were made upon me, by the leaders of one of those powerful parties, which at that time divided the

Eastern Country. Did I quail before them? Did I give up a particle of my own views? Did I flinch from the assertion of which I believed to be right? And when, after the last Election, I felt it my duty to assail the leaders of the opposing party in the East, did I hesitate a moment – or pause to reflect that my private interests might be affected by my public conduct?

Those from whom a Printer has most to expect, in the way of business, are the Public Officers and wealthy Merchants. Which of the former, who has deserved it at my hands, have I failed to attack? And has not my course often run counter to the views which the latter entertained? When the old Bank refused to respond its Paper, and specie was driven from the Country, who opposed them, who more steadily denounced the system that was pursued? And when the New one, shrinking from its pledges, failed to introduce [a] liberal system of banking . . . was I not the first to proclaim the fact? And yet Banks are Institutions with which young men in business would like to be on good terms. No, Gentlemen, there is scarcely a great interest in the Province, that might be useful, to which I have not stood at times opposed; there is not a man whose smile was worth something, or whose frown was to be feared, that I have not assailed, when he trespassed on the rights or interests of those whom it was my duty to guard. . . .

But, it may be asked, what are these liberal opinions? What are you all contending about? I will tell you. As respects this town, we ask for a system of responsible government – such an administration of our municipal affairs as will give to the lower and middling classes that influence in society to which they are entitled, and place all the Officers who collect and expend the people's money under the People's control. Every complaint that has been hitherto made, has been answered by an obnoxious appointment or an increase of expense. The Grand Jury turned out the Clerk of the License, because he did not keep his accounts correctly – what was the result? Most of you know that a new one was appointed, and the fees of the office were doubled; but some of you may not know, that the law was so altered, as to make what was an annual office, a freehold for life, giving the Grand Jury power to appoint a new officer only when the situation became vacant.

As respects the general concerns of the Province, we ask for those free Institutions, which, while they truly reflect the feelings of the people, shall best promote the happiness and pros-

perity of the country. The British laws are modified to suit the condition of the Colonies, and we see no reason why British Institutions should not be, in like manner, adapted to our situation. We are not such fools as to believe, that the glory and the value of the British Constitution, are to be found in the mace, which lies on the table of the Commons, or the woolsack on which the Lord Chancellor sits; we know that its great corner stone is responsibility to the People. In England, one vote of the People's representatives turns out a ministry, and a new one comes in, which is compelled to shape its policy by the views and wishes of the majority. Here, we may record five hundred votes against our ministry, and yet they sit unmoved, reproducing themselves from their own friends and connexions, and from a narrow party in the country; who, though opposed to the People, have a monopoly of influence and patronage. . . . But, gentlemen, in England the people can breathe the breath of life into their government, whenever they please; in this Country, the Government is like an ancient Egyptian mummy, wrapped up in narrow and antique prejudice – dead and inanimate – but yet, likely to last forever. We are desirous of a change, not such as shall divide us from our brethren across the water, but which will ensure to us what they enjoy. . . .

Gentlemen, all we ask is for what exists at home – a system of responsibility to the people, extending through all the Departments supported at the public expense. . . . Of one thing, however, I must remind you – that you can do nothing if you are divided. While Reformers in England were split into parties, their strength was wasted, and improvements were delayed. The case was the same in Ireland, and if you expect to do any thing here, you must cast aside petty jealousies and personal feeling, and act together for the general good.

(*Novascotian*, December 22, 1836)

~ On being declared elected Howe pledged himself to follow the guides which had governed his past life. ~

I was launched upon the troubled sea of politics, almost without my consent and, as the mariner guides himself by the star which the bounty of Heaven affords, or the compass, that has been furnished by the ingenuity of man – so I have felt that there was no safety for me, no guides upon which I could rely but truth, and open and candid dealing. By the aid of those I have still held on my path and, although my vision may at times

have been clouded by human passions and infirmities, yet, generally speaking, I believe they have been my guides. . . .

Gentlemen, I was taught by the Venerable Being who has passed away [i.e., his father], to respect my fellow creatures, and to do them good; I hope I have not forgotten, and never shall forget the lesson. Pardon me, if, in this moment of triumph, overcome by my feelings, I am but a child; in those scenes of intellectual contention which await me; in those struggles for your rights and interests which are to yet come, I will by the blessing of God, endeavour to be a man.

(*Novascotian*, December 22, 1836)

PART TWO

THE STRUGGLE FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT: NOVA SCOTIA A NORMAL SCHOOL

1. COMING TO GRIPS WITH IRRESPONSIBILITY

~ From the very outset Howe told the Assembly that he was opposed to innovation for the sake of innovation. His desire was to have the spirit of British institutions introduced into the government of his native province. Sometimes this might not mean going by British precedents, for only Nova Scotian conditions could determine Nova Scotian needs. ~

I have not that pious horror of innovation with which some Gentlemen are imbued. I do not think that the Colonial Legislatures should always shrink from the adoption of a sound principle, till the Imperial Parliament sets them the example. Would the learned gentleman neglect to shingle his House, till some wealthy neighbour, over the way, put his in a state of repair? I admit, that innovations should not be hastily pressed in any Country. I will not advise pulling down and changing merely for amusement – but am anxious that this House should, without reference to what may be done in other Countries, or said across the water, ascertain where the shoe pinches *us*, and having done so, with a firm hand remove the evil.

(Speech of February 4, 1837: *Novascotian*, February 9, 1837)

~ Early in the session of 1837 the Reformers, and more particularly Howe, drew up the Twelve Resolutions in which they elaborated what they considered to be the basic ills in Nova Scotian government and indicated how they would remedy those evils. The gist of their point of view was contained in the Eleventh and Twelfth Resolutions. ~

11. Resolved, That while the House has a due reverence for British Institutions, and a desire to preserve to themselves and their children the advantages of that Constitution . . . they cannot but feel that those they represent participate but slightly in these blessings. They know that the spirit of that Constitution – the genius of those Institutions – is complete responsibility to the people. . . . But sad experience has taught them that, in this Colony, the People and their Representatives are powerless, exercising upon the local Government very little influence, and possessing no effectual control. In England, the People, by one vote of their Representatives can change the Ministry, and alter any course of policy injurious to their interests – here the Ministry are His Majesty's Council, combining Legislative, Judicial, and Executive powers – holding their seats for life, though nominally at the pleasure of the Crown, and treating with indifference the wishes of the People, and the representatives of the Commons. In England, the Representative Branch can compel a redress of grievances, by withholding the Supplies; here they have no such remedy, because the Salaries of nearly all the Public Officers being provided for by permanent Acts, or paid out of the Casual and Territorial Revenues, or from the produce of Duties collected under Imperial Acts – a stoppage of Supplies, while it inflicted great injury upon the Country, by leaving the Roads, Bridges, and other essential services unprovided for – would not touch the emoluments of the heads of Departments in the Council, or of any, but a few of the subordinate Officers of the Government.

12. Resolved, That as a remedy for these grievances, His Majesty be implored to take such steps, either by granting an Elective Legislative Council, or by such other re-construction of the local Government as will ensure responsibility to the Commons, and confer upon the People of this Province, what they value above all other possessions, the blessings of the British Constitution.

(*Journals of the House of Assembly, Nova Scotia*, 1837, pp. 90-91; or Annand, I, 96)

~ Howe defended the Twelve Resolutions in the Assembly on February 11, 1837. In not asking for a responsible executive he was far behind Upper Canadian Reformers like Robert Baldwin in his constitutional demands. ~

But, sir, I am approaching now the root of all our evils . .

that gross and palpable defect in our local Government, I mean the total absence of all responsibility to the Commons. Compared with the British Parliament, this House has absolutely no power. We meet like a Grand Jury, examine a few accounts, but we cannot expend a shilling without the consent of the Council and, in fact, have no constitutional influence over the Branches of the Government. [Here he referred to and read the Eleventh Resolution.] I ask, Sir, in this Resolution, for nothing more than British Subjects ought to have. . . . An Englishman would consider himself no better than a Russian or a Turk, if he had no other guards for liberty than these. . . .

Gentlemen will probably ask here what remedy do you propose? . . . You are aware, Sir, that in Upper Canada, an attempt was made to convert the Executive Council into the semblance of an English ministry, having its members in both branches of the Legislature, and holding their positions while they retained the confidence of the country. I am afraid that these Colonies, at all events this Province, is scarcely prepared for the erection of such machinery. I doubt whether it would work well here; and the only other remedy that presents itself is, to endeavour to make both branches of the Legislature elective. . . .

[Some members] contemplate the separation of the Legislative from the Executive Council, leaving the whole to be appointed by the Governor. But would this mend the matter – would this give control? It would be only cutting a rotten orange in two, in order to improve its flavour. . . .

I know that [in suggesting an elective Council] I shall hear the cry of republicanism and danger to the constitution. . . . [But] the idea of republicanism, of independence, of severance from the Mother Country, never crosses my mind. . . . I wish to live and die a British subject – but not a Briton only in the name. Give me, give to my Country, the blessed privilege of her Constitution and her laws; and as our earliest thoughts are trained to reverence the great principles of freedom and responsibility, which have made her the wonder of the world, let us be contented with nothing less. Englishmen at home will despise us, if we forget the lessons our common ancestors have bequeathed.

(*Novascotian*, February 23, 1837; or Annand, I, 107-11)

~ Howe was elated that a large majority of the assemblymen supported the Twelve Resolutions. But he was determined to

follow a moderate course, for, when the Council protested the statement that some of its members had "evinced a disposition to protect their own interests and emoluments at the expense of the public," he recommended that the Resolutions be rescinded, to prevent the loss of supply. Later, when supply was assured, the Assembly proceeded by way of address to the Crown. Interestingly enough, the address suggested, as an alternative, the separation of the Executive from the Legislative Council, a proposition which Howe had previously rejected. ~

As a remedy for these grievances, we implore Your Majesty to grant us an Elective Legislative Council; or, to separate the Executive from the Legislative Council; providing for a just Representation of all the great interests of the Province in both; and, by the introduction into the former of some Members of the popular Branch, and otherwise securing responsibility to the Commons, confer upon the People of this Province what they value above all other Possessions, the blessings of the British Constitution.

(*Journals*, 1837, pp. 199-200)

~ Howe's moderation is also evidenced in his summary of the results of his first session in the Assembly. ~

We scarcely expected, in the autumn, that the Reformers would be able to muster a majority on any important measure; and, for one, were prepared to struggle along for a few years in a minority, until the country became more feelingly alive to its own interests, and better prepared to throw the weight into the opposite scale. In this, however, we were agreeably disappointed. Upon some questions the Reform party made a goodly show of strength; upon nearly all they had an actual, though by no means a very decided majority. . . . But, let it not be supposed that they yet occupy the commanding influence in the Lower House that is desirable – that indeed is essential – to give the required weight to their principles and representations, either here or at home. They are confronted by no ordinary share of talent, have to contend against the decided opposition of at least one third of the entire House, and are not unfrequently at the mercy of that section of the members, which is made up of the men of no decided leaning, no fixed principles, the lovers of peace at all hazards, the timid or the indifferent.

(*Novascotian*, May 24, 1837)

~ In December, 1837, the Rebellion in Lower Canada brought to public knowledge what Professor Chester Martin has described as the first perhaps of Howe's political "flashes." At that time the *Novascotian* published a two-year-old letter of Howe to H. S. Chapman, who, while on a mission to the English radicals on behalf of the Lower Canadian Assembly, had requested Howe for a simultaneous demonstration by the Reformers in all the colonies. The magnanimity and breadth of Howe's reply, wrote Professor Martin, attracted attention both in Britain and North America. ~

Though feeling no sympathy for the official faction in Lower Canada . . . and although labouring to reform the public affairs of this my native country, I have for some time past shared in some degree the suspicion, which I assure you very generally prevails in the Lower Colonies, that the party with which you act are determined, at all hazards, to precipitate a contest with the mother country; and in order to effect this object, the redress of real grievances (the existence of which is admitted) was to be sought in a spirit the most uncompromising and offensive. . . .

We do not blame upon the people of Britain the various acts of misrule of which we complain, because we have seen them struggling against the same enemies that have usually oppressed us. . . . Her people are only now re-conquering the rights of which they have been cunningly despoiled. . . . If, when the Tories of Britain are weakened by expulsion from the Corporations, the Irish Church, the unjust monopoly of all offices, civil, naval, and military, the people of Britain, having the power in their own hands, refuse to do us justice; if they withhold their sympathies and co-operation when we seek to follow their examples; if they refuse to carry out in the Colonies the principles they maintain at home, then there is no doubt that the feelings of our population will be turned into different channels, and the connection with Britain be viewed very differently from what it is now.

(Howe to Chapman, October 2, 1835, *Novascotian*, December 21, 1837; or Annand, II, 515-16)

~ In replying to the Assembly's address the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, indicated a willingness to concede a substantial share of the Assembly's demands. He admitted its right to control and appropriate all of the provincial revenues, and he agreed to the division of the Council into executive and legisla-

tive branches. Although denying the Assembly's right to control the public officers in the same way as the House of Commons held ministers responsible in Britain, he nevertheless instructed the Governor to appoint to the Councils those individuals who would be "least open to just exception" and "entitled to the confidence of the great body of the inhabitants." Again Howe expressed his great satisfaction to the Assembly on March 9, 1838. ~

What then have we gained by the labours of the last session? In the first place, we have received *the thanks of our Sovereign.* . . . The next advantage is, *the separation of the Executive and Legislative Councils.* This is a very important change; the second Legislative branch is now more large and popular, and I trust will be much more satisfactory in its transaction of public business. Then *the Chief Justice has been shut out from both Councils*, and this secures the entire separation of the Judiciary, from the contamination of party politics. Next, *we have four members of the popular branch in the Executive Council*, doing business in this House under some responsibility, although not to the same extent that the British ministry is responsible. That body is much more popular than when it sat in its double capacity at the other end of the building. Its members mix with the people's representatives, they represent the people themselves, they are in the midst of popular feelings and expressions. . . . Last session the other end of the building contained but *one* gentleman from the Country [i.e., outside of Halifax], now there are *nine*, in accordance with the representations of the Address. In the last Council we had an overwhelming majority of one religious denomination; now there are eight at least belonging to dissenting congregations. Another advantage . . . is that we have *the doors of the other branch open.* This has not been accomplished with pickaxes and crowbars, as some intimated was the intention, but by pursuing the course which the Constitution and the Law sanctioned. We also have the claim of the Assembly, to controul and appropriate the whole of the Public Revenue arising in the Province, "frankly admitted by the Queen, in the comprehensive and specific form in which it has been preferred," an admission no where, heretofore, to be found on the journals of the house. . . . These are important advances.

~ In the same speech Howe noted that everything which "really emanated from the other side of the Atlantic" was "marked by candour, and frankness, and liberality, creditable to those who sent them." With respect to a civil list bill Lord Glenelg had, in effect, said: You know the country, the revenues, and resources, and wants; take these casual and territorial revenues for the public service and give a fair return to those who must be provided for by the general Government. Because of the Colonial Secretary's liberality, Howe was himself prepared to be accommodating. ~

We are about to make a wise appropriation of the public money or are about to lock up the funds of the Province unnecessarily, in a manner which would make them inaccessible for generations to come. I am somewhat disposed, Sir, weary with those discussions and anxious to settle this question, to go further, at all events for present incumbents, than perhaps my cool judgement would dictate. . . .

The Sovereign comes in a dignified manner, and asks for an allowance for the officers of the colony, offering these revenues in return – and we should best perform our duty by meeting the subject boldly, and making a reasonable allowance for every essential service, according to the circumstances of the country whose finances we are bound carefully to superintend. . . .

I differ in some respects from the honourable gentleman from Yarmouth [Mr. Huntington] and am ready to make some sacrifices for the purpose of ensuring an arrangement. . . . I am prepared to make sacrifices, but I would not sacrifice too much.

(*Novascotian*, April 5, 1838; or Annand, I, 151-52)

~ But Howe's calm satisfaction did not last for long. Before the session of 1838 concluded, the Legislative Council had rejected the Assembly's bill on the civil list; the composition of the new councils had not been as representative as the Reformers had hoped, and when they were reconstituted because of an irregularity in setting them up, the official faction was even more firmly in the saddle, the one liberal assemblyman in the Executive Council, Herbert Huntington, being forced to retire. Once again the Assembly addressed the Crown praying for a removal of the ills, but this time the tone of the reply was altogether different. Not only was the composition of the councils confirmed, but the civil list question was withdrawn from the consideration of the provincial Legislature. In addressing

the Assembly on January 18, 1839, Howe showed why the lower House was rendered powerless. ~

There was hardly a public servant in the Province, who could not, by his representations and his influence, thwart any resolution or address which the assembled representatives of the whole country thought it their duty to adopt. The house expired at each returning spring – the members were scattered to their homes in various parts of the country; but another body continued alive and active, and prepared to counteract whatever did not suit their views . . . those who receive the salaries alluded to, and who are interested in keeping up the existing system. For every Nova Scotian seen by the British Ministry, who expresses the opinions of the Assembly, they see twenty who speak the opinions of the opposite party.

(*Novascotian*, January 24, 1839)

~ Howe again attacked the despatches on January 24, 1839. ~

My conviction becomes every day the more rooted, that if we are to remain part of the British Empire, and I pray that we ever may, we must be British subjects to the fullest extent of British constitutional freedom. . . . When the language [of the despatches in 1837 and 1838] was contrasted, it would not cause wonder that men should be distrusted, who could in one moment offer an Indian gift, in the next withdraw it; in one moment speak the language of freedom, in the next the dictatorial style of a master to his slave. . . .

The consideration of the casual and territorial revenue has been withdrawn from the House. The salaries . . . are fixed from these revenues; instead of being left to the discretion of the legislature, as every Englishman would say they should be, they are fixed at rates which the Assembly would never agree to. . . . If the country feel as I feel, they would rather be taxed double or treble what they are taxed, than yield a sixpence on compulsion, contrary to the principles which every Englishman values so highly in the history of his country. This feeling, this principle, should be looked upon as part of our estate, and we should look on him who would rob us of it, as we would on him who would deprive us of our property. . . .

Was there a schoolboy who did not know, the moment the lists of the Councils were sent abroad, that the directions had been disobeyed, that the rules laid down in the despatches had not been carried out? . . .

It has been frequently said, sir, that these colonies are burthensome to the Mother Country, and that we should not complain of slight grievances because we have so many benefits; we are protected, and pay nothing for our advantages. . . . To me, Sir, the dignity and integrity of the Empire are dear, and I feel, I trust, as a British subject should feel, proud of the History and Literature and Science of the Mother Country, of belonging to that Empire, which presents to the world, in all its phases, an example of greatness and glory. But, Sir, here is the country of my birth – this little spot, between Cape North and Cape Sable, is dear to me, as a Nova Scotian, above every other place – and while priding myself in the glories of the Empire, I respect, as a native should do, the soil on which I tread. . . .

The time has now arrived in which the house must recede, or must maintain its ground, when we must repel additional evils attempted, and make a full and personal expression of the grievances of the Province, or fail in our duty.

(*Novascotian*, January 31, 1839; or Annand, I, 190-203)

~ Howe's stronger stand led to charges that he was helping to promote disaffection, strife, and anarchy. To such charges he reacted strongly, as on January 26, 1839. ~

Here there is none of that disaffection that exists elsewhere. We know better than that; the reformers of Nova Scotia are seven-eighths of the whole population, and they are too well aware of the position they occupy – and what they would throw away, by any foolish contest, which might be construed into a struggle against the authority of the Crown. It has been a pleasure and a pride to me, Sir, that during the eight or ten years I have seen of public life, there never occurred, within my knowledge, one act of violence, committed in any reform movement of the people of this Province; though thousands have been gathered together at times, not a blow has been struck, not a pane of glass has been broken, or one act committed, which the Queen would have found fault with if she were herself a personal witness. . . . Contrast this with what used to take place in the "good old times," before reformers were known. I have seen some, now in the opposition ranks, at elections, heading bands armed with cudgels, and employed in beating or pursuing their opponents. I am happy to see that those times have passed away, to observe the abused march of intellect conducing to good order, and obedience to the laws, and peace, and a love of

rational reform spreading and growing side by side with these principles.

(*Novascotian*, February 14, 1839)

~ In February, 1839 the so-called Aroostook war was responsible for another of Howe's flashes. The Assembly was in session on February 26 when the eastern mail brought the news that Maine was marching troops into the disputed territory along New Brunswick's northwest border. Howe's response was automatic. ~

Mr. Howe . . . said that the time had evidently arrived for the Legislature . . . to act with vigour and unanimity. He hoped, therefore, that . . . as the mail left to-morrow, such an expression of feeling would go with it, as to satisfy our brethren in New Brunswick that we were determined to aid them in the contest in which they were about to be engaged.

(*Novascotian*, February 28, 1839)

~ With despatch a Committee on the Military Defence of the Province reported resolutions drawn up by Howe authorizing the Governor to call out the militia and to spend up to £100,000 to cope with the emergency. On Howe's insistence that the din of party warfare be hushed, the Assembly had, by nightfall, adopted both resolutions unanimously. Because of the unprecedented circumstances, it was agreed to suspend the rules of the House and allow the spectators in the gallery to join the Assembly in giving three cheers for New Brunswick. ". . . the Speaker rose in his chair and led the cheers, his hat waving over his head, the members and audience below the bar, and in the gallery, joined, and gave three times three thundering peals."

Never, wrote Howe, had he witnessed such a heart-stirring scene, and never before were such sounds heard in the House of Assembly.

Such a demonstration of loyalty ought to have been the best introduction possible for William Young and Herbert Huntington, whom the Assembly decided to send to London to present its case instead of proceeding by address as in 1837 and 1838. But meanwhile the Durham Report had been made public, and despite Howe's earlier doubts about the practicability of making the colonial ministries directly responsible to the Assembly, he unreservedly accepted Durham's recommendations. ~

We have risen from the perusal of this admirable exposition

of the state of the British Colonies in North America, with a higher estimate of the powers of the Noble Lord, and a more sanguine anticipation of the ultimate termination of Colonial misrule, than we had ever ventured to form. We did not believe there was a nobleman in Britain who had the ability and the firmness to grapple with the great questions committed to Lord Durham's care, in a spirit so searching, and yet so frank; nor a man who, in one short summer, could collect and digest so much information, and draw from it such a volume of instruction to the Government and people of England. It is impossible for a Colonist to read this Report dispassionately through, and not recognize on every page the features of that system which has now become contemptible in the eyes of every man of common understanding, who has no interest in keeping it up. We wish a copy of this Report was in the hands of every head of a family in Nova Scotia; for although we shall take some pains, by extracts and abstracts, to give our readers some knowledge of its contents, it is a volume that every Colonist should have upon his shelf. The people of Nova Scotia should study it as the best exposition that has yet been given of the causes of the dissensions in the Canadas, and containing the best suggestion for the avoidance of kindred troubles in all the Provinces, that has yet appeared. The remedy for the state of conflict between the People and the local Executives, which prevails or has prevailed in all the Colonies, has two prime recommendations, being perfectly *simple* and eminently *British* – it is to let the *majority* and not the *minority* govern, and compell every Governor to select his advisers from those who *enjoy the confidence of the people* and can *command a majority in the popular Branch.*

(*Novascotian*, April 11, 1839; or Annand, I, 212-13)

~ But Lord John Russell, who had just become Colonial Secretary, argued that a colonial executive council did not stand in the same position as a British cabinet. While the sovereign acted on the advice of his ministers, a colonial governor acted upon instructions from the Colonial Secretary. Hence, to require a governor to accept the advice of his colonial executive could mean nothing less than separation from the Empire.

Howe sought to meet these objections in his first series of letters to Lord John Russell dated September 18, 1839. Professor Chester Martin described these letters as the colonial counterpart to Durham's *Responsible Government for Colonies.* In

them Howe demonstrated that, under the existing system, a governor accepted colonial advice whether he wanted to or not; that normally he was the helpless tool of an official faction. Even more important, he argued that the existing brand of colonial government actually tended to separate the colonies from the mother country and that the implementation of his ideas, instead of leading to their separation, would truly unite them to Britain by giving them the blessings of British institutions. ~

I have ever held, my Lord, and still hold to the belief, that the population of British North America are sincerely attached to the present State; that they are proud of their origin, deeply interested in the integrity of the Empire and not anxious for the establishment of any other form of government here than that which you enjoy at home. . . . Why should we desire a severance of old ties that are more honourable than any new ones we can form? Why should we covet institutions more perfect than those which have worked so well and produced such admirable results? . . .

The English rule is completely reversed on this side of the Atlantic. Admitting that in Lower Canada . . . such a policy may have been necessary; surely there is no reason why the people of Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, should, on that account, be deprived of the application of a principle which is the corner-stone of the British Constitution. . . .

You ask me for the remedy. Lord Durham has stated it distinctly; the Colonial Governors must be commanded to govern by the aid of those who possess the confidence of the people and are supported by a majority of the representative branch. Where is the danger? Of what consequence is it to the people of England whether half-a-dozen persons, in whom that majority have confidence, but of whom they know nothing and care less, manage our local affairs; or the same number selected from the minority and whose policy the bulk of the population distrust? Suppose there was at this moment a majority in our Executive Council who think with the Assembly, what effect would it have upon the funds? Would the stocks fall? Would England be weaker, less prosperous or less respected, because the people of Nova Scotia were satisfied and happy? . . .

The principle of responsibility to the popular branch must be

introduced into all the colonies without delay. It is the only simple and safe remedy for an inveterate and very common disease. It is mere mockery to tell us that the Governor himself is responsible. He must carry on the government by and with the few officials whom he finds in possession when he arrives. He may flutter and struggle in the net, as some well-meaning Governors have done, but he must at last resign himself to his fate; and like a snared bird be content with the narrow limits assigned him by his keepers. I have known a Governor bullied, sneered at, and almost shut out of society, while his obstinate resistance to the system created a suspicion that he might not become its victim; but I never knew one who, even with the best intentions and the full concurrence and support of the representative branch, backed by the confidence of his Sovereign, was able to contend, on anything like fair terms, with the small knot of functionaries who form the Councils, fill the offices, and wield the powers of the Government. The plain reason is, because, while the Governor is amenable to his Sovereign, and the members of Assembly are controlled by their constituents, these men are not responsible at all; and can always protect and sustain each other, whether assailed by the representatives of the Sovereign or the representatives of the people. It is indispensable, then, to the dignity, the independence, the usefulness of the Governor himself, that he should have the power to shake off his thraldom, as the Sovereign does if unfairly hampered by faction; and by an appeal to the people, adjust the balance of power. Give us this truly British privilege, and colonial grievances will soon become a scarce article in the English market....

Can an Englishman, an Irishman or a Scotchman, be made to believe, by passing a month upon the sea, that the most stirring periods of his history are but a cheat and a delusion; ... that the principles of civil liberty, which from childhood he has been taught to cherish and to protect by forms of stringent responsibility, must, with the new light breaking in upon him on this side of the Atlantic, be cast aside as an useless incumbrance? ... My Lord, my countrymen feel, as they have a right to feel, that the Atlantic, the great highway of communication with their brethren at home, should be no barrier to shut out the civil privileges and political rights, which more than anything else, makes them proud of the connection; and they feel also, that there is nothing in their present position or past conduct to warrant such exclusion. ... Have we done anything to justify

the alienation of our birthright? . . . On some of the hardest fought fields of the Peninsula, my countrymen died in the front rank with their faces to the foe. The proudest naval trophy of the last American war was brought by a Nova Scotian into the harbour of his native town; and the blood that flowed from Nelson's death wound in the cockpit of the *Victory* mingled with that of a Nova Scotian stripling beside him, struck down in the same glorious fight. Am I not then justified, my Lord, in claiming for my countrymen that constitution, which can be withheld from them by no plea but one unworthy of a British statesman – the tyrant's plea of power? I know that I am; and I feel also, that this is not the race that can be hoodwinked with sophistry, or made to submit to injustice without complaint. All suspicion of disloyalty we cast aside, as the product of ignorance or cupidity; we ask for nothing more than British subjects are entitled to; but we shall be contented with nothing less.

(Supplement to the *Novascotian*, October 10, 1839; or Annand, II, 235-83)

~ Between the sessions of 1839 and 1840 a circular despatch dated October 16, 1839, went out to all the colonies with representative institutions, in which Lord John Russell instructed the governors not to treat the tenure of colonial offices as one during good behaviour, but as one in which the holders of such offices might be called upon to retire "as often as any sufficient motives of public policy may suggest the expediency of that measure." The despatch was designed to assist some of the governors in dealing with difficult political situations, but in New Brunswick Governor Sir John Harvey went so far as to declare that it conferred new constitutions upon the colonies. The Nova Scotian Reformers adopted a similar viewpoint and carried a vote of non-confidence in the Nova Scotian Executive Council. Howe spoke to this motion on February 3, 1840. ~

If I were asked, what is this question which they are approaching, I would say, that it is the foundation of a constitution resembling that of England, which lies at the base of every good government and there can be no wise and satisfactory administration of public affairs without it. . . . In approaching this question, I would ask, is it new, so far as the experience of the Assembly goes? It has been said that the view has been learned from the Earl of Durham. I admit that, as respects that nobleman's opinion, I am glad to have such authority in support

of my argument; but it was not learned from him. This House had asked for a government, responsible in local affairs, before his Lordship saw this continent. . . .

It strikes me as curious that the despatch was received in a neighbouring colony as a new Constitution . . . while in Nova Scotia, as far as the public has the means of judging, no notice has been taken of the document. . . . My opinion is that the despatch did give responsibility; that it bestowed all that was required by those who thought with me on the subject. . . .

Would it not be wise to settle this matter for Nova Scotia? The other colonies would follow her example, and one after the other would adopt these rational and beneficial institutions. I would feel proud and happy that the commencement of these great changes should be laid here and that they should extend into all the British dependencies.

(*Novascotian*, February 13, 1840; or Chisholm, I, 272-92)

~ In reply to the Assembly's resolution expressing non-confidence in his Executive Council, the Governor stated that he was completely satisfied with the advice and assistance of his advisers. When the Assembly brought Lord John Russell's despatch of October 16, 1839, to his attention, he contended, quite correctly, that it had not been designed to effect a fundamental change in the colonial constitutions. Nonetheless, the Reformers took what proved to be their strongest action in the struggle for responsible government – the adoption of an address to the Crown requesting Sir Colin Campbell's removal. At a public meeting in Halifax on March 30, 1840, Howe described the action as regrettable but necessary. ~

I have been pretty sorely tried in public life; but I declare that the severest trial of my life, that which most agitated my bosom, and weighed on my spirits, and caused me the keenest pain, that which I would most gladly have put aside and avoided, was the moving and advocating that address. I felt pretty much as a soldier would, who should be called out on a firing party, to shoot a man who had been impelled, by circumstances and bad advisers into crime. I felt, although compelled by the constitution to take the steps that were taken, that his Excellency was surrounded by persons who were more to blame than he himself was; and if ever I performed a task with a heavy heart, it was that. . . . Having performed that painful duty, I and my colleagues and the country members who voted with us,

felt that all that could be done was done and that the question was now to be tried out by the people – not by addresses . . . but *by the general elections of the Province. . . .*

I have no fears as to what will be your determination; and I know that the fishermen along the shores, who used to be carted up, or shipped in boat-loads like cattle, to elections, have become more intelligent than they were, more awake to their true interests, and to the justice of the cause in which we were engaged; and I have no fear of the old influences operating on this class of the freeholders to any great extent. The farmers on the peninsula, and beyond it, are also with the Assembly, and the intelligent yeomanry of the country will be with us almost to a man.

(*Novascotian*, April 2, 1840; or Annand, I, 279-86)

~ The Solicitor-General, J. W. Johnston, argued that the British system of executive responsibility was inapplicable to a small colony like Nova Scotia which lacked the great constitutional issues around which parties could be built; consequently party government would be a mere struggle for power. From this viewpoint Howe differed strongly in a "Letter to the People of Nova Scotia." ~

The learned Gentleman is mistaken in supposing that there are no great questions, or principles of any importance, in the Colonies, to form the touchstones of party, or upon which rival combinations could be arranged, as they are at home. Compared, of course, with the gigantic interests at stake in England, every question that arises in the Colonies is comparatively insignificant. But "little things are great to little men," and to little Provinces; and I could point to a dozen questions of internal policy, upon which the intellectual powers of our public men have been engaged during the past ten years, and to a dozen more which will probably engage them for the ten years to come, that were or will be of just as much importance to the People of Nova Scotia, as were the questions upon which ministers have come in and gone out in almost every reign since 1688.

(*Novascotian*, April 23 and 30, 1840; or Annand, II, 312)

~ By this time Howe's rough handling of the official faction had aroused strong resentment among its members, all the more so because his success in the Assembly was exceeding all expectations. He soon realized that he would have to fight a duel with

one of them or lose face. A letter to his half-sister dated May 24, 1840, described his encounter with John C. Halliburton, son of the Chief Justice, on March 14. ~

Nobody but himself could exactly understand the requirements of my position, and constituted as society is, the almost imperative necessity there was for my taking the step. . . . For my part I hate and detest duelling as much as you do – as much as anybody can – a person who engages in it lightly must be a fool – he who is fond of it must be a villain. It is a remnant of a barbarous age, which civilization is slowly but steadily driving away, but yet it is not worn out. . . . My own belief is that there are situations which try the moral courage more severely than duelling. So far as my experience goes, I would rather stand a shot, than go through the "rescinding of the Resolutions," "the Libel trial" or the moving the "Address of Censure." On either or all of these occasions there was more at stake than a limb, so far as I was concerned, more than a life as regarded the Country, and I suffered a thousand times more, than on the morning, I went out with Halliburton. . . . I had been long impressed with the conviction it would have to be done with somebody, at some time – and had balanced the pros and cons and regarded the matter as settled. So long as the party I opposed possessed all the legislative influence they did not much mind my scribbling in the Newspapers – when I got into the House they anticipated that *a failure* there would weaken my influence as a political writer, and believing I would fail were rather glad than sorry. When however, they found I not only held my own against the best of them, but was fast combining and securing a majority upon principles striking at the root of their monopoly, they tried the effect of wheedling, and that failing, resorted to intimidation. . . .

[On several occasions a duel was averted.] Thus stood matters when Halliburton's missive came. To him I could not object. Though younger than I, and having neither any family nor political party depending upon him, still he was in the situation of a gentleman, and had a right to make the demand. . . . Feeling assured that he could not draw back, and that if I did, it would subject me to repeated annoyances from others, and perhaps either weaken my position as a public man or compel me to shoot some fellow at last, I selected a friend [Huntington] whom I knew would go through with it if necessary. He did his best to

prevent it, but the thing had to be done, and "all is well that ends well." I never intended to fire at him and would not for Ten Thousand Pounds – all that was necessary for me was to let them see that the Reformers could teach them a lesson of coolness and moderation, and cared as little for the pistols, if anything was to be got by fighting. . . . Politically, there were strong temptations [to fight this duel], and among them the one which I know you will prize the highest was the perfect independence I secured – to explain or apologize – to fight or refuse, in future. A proof of the advantage gained in this respect was shown a fortnight ago. Sir Rupert D. George [the Provincial Secretary], being annoyed at a passage in the first letter to the Solicitor General, sent John Spry Morris to me with a challenge – my answer was that "never having had any personal quarrel with Sir Rupert, I should not fire at him if I went out, and that having no great fancy for being shot at, by every public officer whose intellect I might happen to compare with his emoluments, I begged leave to decline." This I could not have done had he come first, but now the honour was not equal to the risk – nothing was to be gained either for myself or my cause – they got laughed at and nobody blamed me.

(*Joseph Howe Papers* [Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada], VI, 14-17)

2. THE COALITION EXPERIMENT (1840-43): A CHIMERA

~ To solve the political problems of Nova Scotia the Governor General, Charles Poulett Thomson (soon to be Lord Sydenham) spent two weeks in the province in July, 1840. The outcome was an agreement to set up that type of ministry which was his peculiar contribution to colonial politics, a coalition ministry in which "the governor was to govern, and the Executive Councillors were to be the governor's 'placemen' . . . diverting men's mind from awkward abstractions." It was no surprise that the Tories accepted his proposals for a coalition; it was a tribute to his powers of persuasion that Howe agreed to join the Tories in a coalition.

Sydenham undoubtedly played upon Howe's deep-rooted sense of loyalty, arguing that it was his duty to co-operate with the Governor General in reducing discord. But his assertion that Howe had "made the amende honourable and eschewed his heresies on Responsible Government publicly in his newspaper" was clearly off the mark. Howe accepted his proposals because,

in some respects, they appeared to constitute an important step forward. ~

The Governor General's plan is to have . . . an Executive Council, composed of Heads of Departments, and leading members of both branches of the Legislature, possessed of political influence, and nobody else, except in extreme cases. The duty of these men will be, to consult upon and prepare the leading measures of the session, to carry down and defend the propositions of the Government, to advise the Governor, when assistance is required. . . . This Council will be recruited, from time to time, from the ranks of those who, in the Assembly, evince superior talent, and show that they enjoy the confidence of the country. . . .

[Had the Reformers' propositions of last autumn been accepted] we should have had a Council doing the work, and the Heads of Departments and Public Officers enjoying their emoluments, but exempt from all responsibility to public opinion. The Governor General tackles them into the team; he makes them conduct the Government, and he tells them distinctly, that if they cannot obtain sufficient Parliamentary talent to assist, they must move off, and hand over the office to those who have the requisite weight and ability. This is a very important improvement upon our plan, and most completely reverses the old order of things, in which the Public Officer was every thing, and the member of the Legislature nothing. . . .

The theory of the Governor General's plan differs from ours in this – "the Queen's Representative can devolve the responsibility of his acts on no man" – that is, he will be held responsible for every act done in his Government, and cannot yield to other hands any portion of his patronage; while we believed, that the direct responsibility might be very fairly shared with the Executive Council. In practice, however, there will be very little difference in the two modes – the whole scheme being based upon public confidence and popular support, and the Executive Council having to defend all appointments, and having the privilege to resign if they are not satisfactory, the greatest weight will, upon all such matters, be given to their representations and remonstrances; and any Governor must be an idiot, who dispenses his favours regardless of their position and his own. The obvious tendency of this system will be to cure many if not all of the evils with which our public affairs have been

perplexed, and to strengthen and elevate the representative Branch of the Legislature, by making it the high road to honour and influence.

(*Novascotian*, July 23, 1840)

~ On the request of the new Lieutenant-Governor, the liberal Lord Falkland, Howe duly entered the Executive Council. Although alive to the personal risk he ran, he was determined to do "what I know your Lordship [Sydenham] expected of me." Naturally he regretted the absence from the Council of Herbert Huntington, sometimes called the Robert Baldwin of Nova Scotia. With unerring foresight Huntington had already declined to be a member of any Executive Council which contained the Tory Alexander Stewart. Since Huntington was not in Halifax when the coalition was formed, Howe wrote him, asking him to consider becoming a member, or, at the very worst, not to prejudge it until it had had a chance to prove itself. ~

His Lordship [Falkland] stated that the object of his mission was to carry out, in Novascotia, with firmness and good faith, the policy recommended by Mr. [Thomson] and acted upon in Canada – that his wish was to form a strong Administration based upon the confidence of the country and sustained by a majority of the Representatives, and that although he might not be prepared at the present moment to do all that I and my friends could wish, he yet hoped that I would give him my assistance, in the full confidence that all that was necessary should be done hereafter to carry out the principles for which we had been contending, and give entire satisfaction. On enquiring about you I found that you had been recommended by the Governor General, as he promised, but that, as he had not seen you himself, and as the old stories about your extreme views and violent conduct had been strenuously urged against you at the Colonial Office; it was better to give Lord Falkland an opportunity of making your acquaintance and judging for himself whether you are an animal that will run in harness, without upsetting the Council and picking up your heels at most of the team. Of course I gave you as good a character as I could, but knowing your letters in my possession, in which you vowed that you would not go in with Stewart, I was in no position to press the point further. . . . There stands the matter then, as I approached it – the honour is open to you, of the first vacancy,

before any body else of the party, provided, upon his Lordship's own view of your character and principles, you can agree. . . . I hope that you and our other friends will approve of this step, or at all events that you will make up your mind to take a generous and rational view of the situation in which Lord Falkland and myself were placed, and instead of lending yourself to any factious or intemperate opposition at the outset, will wait until you have an opportunity of meeting him, and testing the sincerity of his professions. That there are difficulties about men and measures, rising out of the past, we all know, but any reliance is upon principles which I believe will gradually work all clear, and upon the firmness of his Lordship, which I assure you at the first start was put to a very strong test.

(Howe to Huntington, n.d., *Howe Papers*, X, 39-41)

~ Despite Howe's pleas, Huntington and a small group of Reform assemblymen refused to support the coalition. To them Howe's decision looked, at its worst, like surrender; at its best, like an ineffectual armistice. Great progress, they contended, had been made since 1837 in welding together a strong, well-disciplined Reform party; Howe's action, in splitting its ranks, was therefore a thoroughly retrograde step. Yet Howe's conduct is quite comprehensible if one remembers, in Professor Chester Martin's words, that he "distrusted stark theories and relied . . . upon the subtler accommodations of practice and experience." Throughout the election campaign in the autumn of 1840, Howe argued that, if Nova Scotia were to be a Normal School for the other colonies, it ought not to press organic changes too rapidly, but be content with steady, piecemeal progress. ~

To me, it is a matter of pure satisfaction, to reflect, that by the peaceful agitation of four years, in which from one end of the country to the other, there has not been a blow struck or a pane of glass broken, great changes have been wrought, and invaluable principles established, for which other countries have for centuries struggled in vain, or have only purchased by civil conflict, and blood, and tears. . . .

In claiming your suffrages . . . as a servant of the Government, let it be distinctly understood that I mean to give it a cordial and generous support so long as I believe it is administered [in accordance with the well-understood wishes and interests of the people]. To press organic changes further – to cherish feelings which past conflicts have aroused – to contend for more

than can, or than ought to be yielded until experience has demonstrated the absolute necessity, would seem to be the duty neither of a good man nor of a good subject.

(Letter to the Freeholders of the County of Halifax, *Novascotian*, October 22, 1840; or Annand, I, 292-95)

Allow me, also, to improve this occasion, by warning you, that you must not, as the friends of liberal principles, expect too much from the government at present established over us. Our duty is, to give to Lord Falkland a generous, manly support, to assist him in carrying out measures which we believe useful . . . and not expect that everything can be accomplished at once. . . .

Nova Scotia has a high duty and destiny before her. Looking to her narrow boundaries, you may say that it is a small country, and the inhabitants few, but her influence is wide and important. There is no sentiment uttered here to-night, which, in ten days, will not be read on the shores of Lake Ontario. By such means it is, that this little Province has more influence and power than could be imagined, looking to her geographical extent only. She has an influence in New Brunswick, in P. E. Island, in Lower and Upper Canada, and my pride and hope is, that we shall make Nova Scotia, by her loyalty, intelligence, and spirit, as it were, a Normal school for British North America, to show how far British liberty may be assumed in a Colony, and at what point it should stop, and the people be content. My own belief is, that by the change which has taken place in our constitution and by your intelligence and virtue, we may become a wholesome and bright example to all our sister colonies. You gave the health of a nobleman whom I was proud to see remembered – I allude to Lord Sydenham – to his penetration and firmness, we owe the changes which have recently taken place, and we cannot make a better return for the favours conferred by his Lordship, than by throwing the influence of Nova Scotia in the scale of Canadian politics, strengthening his hands, and giving the principles we value a wide circulation, until, in the language of the toast, Great Britain "sees her fairest features reflected in the western wave."

(Speech at Reform Dinner, November 23, 1840, *Novascotian*, November 26, 1840; or Annand, I, 299-300)

~ During the session of 1841 Howe continued to emphasize the constitutional advances which had been made under the coalition, and to argue that the gains would have been greater

if a split had not occurred in the ranks of the Reformers. Typical was his speech of February 26. ~

The fact is, that that responsibility striven for [the majority] have now secured. A vote of this House, now, may place the Governor in this position: he shall discharge his Council, change his policy, or dissolve the House. That is the system which every man of the majority had in view, and it is truly British. Sir Colin Campbell would do neither of the three. He evaded the despatch by which the new policy was announced. His Council would not resign; he would not dismiss them; he shrank from dissolving the House; and finally, all parties in the colony shifted the responsibility off their own shoulders to those of the Secretary of State. That system is at an end. The responsibility now rests on the Governor and his Council, and, whether it is called direct or indirect, it is sufficient to ensure good Government. The direct responsibility which I, as an individual, contended for, has reference only to local appointments throughout the country. That opinion I yield, as an individual, to the better judgment of the Governor General. The Governor, as the Queen's Representative, still dispenses the patronage, but, as the Council are bound to defend his appointments, the responsibility, even as regards appointments, is nearly as great in the one case as the other. . . .

What position should the members of the old majority have taken up? Their principles had been adopted . . . they should have kept a united front, supporting the Government cordially, but stimulating or checking it as circumstances should warrant. . . . They had gained many concessions from the mother country, had made a fair, honourable arrangement; they stood on high ground. . . . I should be sorry to part company with old friends; we could do most good when together. While they acted with me we advanced from triumph to triumph, but within the past fortnight they have fallen from defeat to defeat. They should, according to my view, have taken a different position, should have supported the Government as established, giving it a fair trial, and should have gone on developing and working out their own principles, as far as was consistent with the circumstances of the country. . . . By doing so, they would have remained united, and instead of showing the disunion and weakness which has lately marked their acts and councils, have been powerful for good or evil, which they were once, and

would have continued, had they followed the course I have indicated.

(*Novascotian*, March 11, 1841; or Chisholm, I, 369-71)

~ Huntington's suspicions of the coalition were all too well-founded. From the beginning its Tory members took delight in making statements about the extent of their responsibility which were entirely at variance with the views of Falkland and Howe; at the same time the Tory hangers-on treated the coalition with contempt and heaped abuse upon its Reform members. As Huntington shrewdly suspected, the arch-villain turned out to be Alexander Stewart. In February, 1841 he had sown the first seeds of discontent by declaring that responsible government in a colony was responsible nonsense – it was independence. In February, 1842 he told the Legislative Council that "the true principle of Colonial Government is, that the Governor is responsible for the acts of his government to his Sovereign, and the Executive Councillors are responsible to the Governor," and let it go at that. An open rupture in the ministry appeared imminent, but it was averted when another member of the Executive Council, E. M. Dodd, elaborated what was jocosely called the "Doddean Confession of Faith." It admitted the truth of Stewart's statement but added: "The success of [a Governor's] administration depends upon his having a council secure in the affections of the House. His Councillors are responsible to him, but he takes them because they possess your [i.e., the Assembly's] confidence, and he will dismiss them when they have lost it. This involves their responsibility to you." For the moment the coalition survived, but it had suffered a further loss of public confidence. When, shortly afterwards, a bankruptcy bill which was sponsored by the coalition ministry suffered defeat in the Assembly, Howe confessed his disillusionment to the Governor. ~

Again I ask myself, how does it happen that a Government, combining so much ability and information is so weak in the popular branch? and I am driven to one of two conclusions – either that a large number in both the old parties disapprove of the coalition which has been formed, or that the Government is weak, because the opposition have the active although the covert support of nearly all the public officers receiving its emoluments and exercising an influence through its public departments. . . .

If your Lordship should be of opinion that the Coalition is at the root of the evil . . . I am perfectly willing to tender my resignation and give [my] colleagues a chance of trying the experiment without me. . . . As matters stand, I am not quite sure that this would not be the best for all parties. I cannot shut my eyes to some facts which have long fixed themselves upon my attention. . . . [Although] I ceased from all attacks upon or intrigues against my colleges [*sic*], almost every public officer, and almost all the personal friends and relatives of the Members of the Council, not only opposed us openly, but have ever since intrigued against the Government, and give to it the most determined opposition. . . . This appears to be an anomalous and extraordinary state of things, and one I cannot account for upon the ordinary principles of action. . . . Almost all my personal and political friends in and about the capital support the Government – almost all those of other Members of the Council oppose it, and the conclusion which many draw from the fact is that there must be a want of sincerity towards myself if not towards your Lordship; . . . although I make no charge against the gentlemen themselves, it has long seemed to me that unless the coalition can secure the aid of an extensive personal influence among the friends of both parties, it ought not to exist. . . .

[Howe then turned to the second possible reason for the weakness of the coalition, the action of paid servants of the Crown.] As some of these officers had neither the ability nor the influence to serve the Government in the Legislature, as not a single head of a department held a seat in the popular Branch, the least they could have done, would have been to have acted fairly towards men disposed to carry on the public business without pay, and who were acting honourably and generously towards them. I have reason to believe that they have not only not done this, but that the whole influence of most of the public departments has been used to weaken and embarrass the government. . . .

The remedy for that state of things would seem to be to come at once to the Canadian system of conducting the Government by Heads of Departments. The opportunity for doing this will probably soon occur. [Howe indicated that he expected the government to be beaten upon much of its program.] If your Lordship determines to appeal to the country, it may be as well to give the heads of the Provincial Departments notice to qualify themselves by election to the popular Branch. If they

succeed your Lordship will be certain of their active co-operation in carrying on the government, if they fail, men of talent and influence will take their places, and the administration will not longer resemble a House divided against itself, or a ship in which all parties are doing their duty but the pursers and doctors, who having little work and no perils to encounter, spend their time in starving and poisoning the Crew.

(Howe to Falkland, n.d., *Howe Papers*, X, 30-34)

~ About the same time Howe suggested to Falkland the desirability of naming some Liberals to be heads of departments. With respect to himself, he felt that his talents could be put to better use in the Provincial Secretaryship than in the Post Office or Excise departments, one of which, it had been intimated, he was likely to receive. This letter reveals, above all, Howe's confidence in his ability to perform the highest policy-making functions in the province; his critics would have described it as just another exhibition of unabashed egotism. But his hopes in this direction were not to be realized for another six years; in September, 1842, he became the Collector of Excise. ~

The great object with the liberal party now, and it is one *in which your Lordship has a deep interest*, ought to be to obtain a footing in some of the Departments, in order to break up or materially neutralize that combined official and monied influence arising out of the expenditures of the Government which they believe has been and will ever be exerted against them and against your Lordship. They have been the majority for six years, yet the minority have dispensed the patronage. . . . It would seem but sound policy for your Lordship rather to seek occasion to redress the balance than to go out of your way to increase the inequality. . . .

[As for himself] though the Excise or Post Office would be the easiest and least responsible for me, if your Lordship desired to use me in the way most likely to strengthen the government, and ensure satisfaction for the future, it would be better to place me in the *Secretary's office*. . . .

In looking to the House of Commons, your Lordship well knows that except upon legal points the Secretaries and not the Crown Officers, are the most acceptable and useful expositors and defenders of the measures of the Government. . . . With the knowledge I have of the temper of our House, with the friends I have there, and the facility which long practice has given me

in speaking and writing I have the confidence to believe that if representing the Government there in that capacity I could do more good than in any other. If in the Post Office or Excise my mind and time would be occupied with my own department, a branch of the Government only – the Secretary's business would be to master the general business and policy of the Administration, and to give luminous views of it and minute details, whenever required. Another reason influences me, in this matter. It has been proved that Lawyers are not the best leaders of our House. I found half a dozen of the best in it in 1836 and at once took the majority from them – Huntington has more influence than Creighton, Desbarres, Turnbull, Fairbanks, and Henry put together. There seems to be something in legal training which mars a man's mind nearly as much as it improves it, and every storm that rises satisfies me that some of our friends want more of nerve, tact and facility of resource, than they have, and that all of us together have not more than is required. If appointed to the Secretaryship, the study of my life would be the country, its government, its legislation, and relations with the Mother Country and the surrounding Colonies, and having every facility for acquiring information and winning friends, I will be enabled to make up in some degree for the absence of other Heads of Department from the House. I may be mistaken, but to make this use of me would appear to be both sounder policy in your Lordship, and the Colonial Secretary, than to set me diving into mail bags or collecting provincial duties.

Your Lordship may say I am a partizan – this is true, but even in that character I have but three or four personal foes in the House, and in a new capacity these few might soon be won. The other objection I know not well how to answer – your Lordship feels the loneliness of an isolated position and thinks your Secretary should be your friend. If you have one knit into your affections by early associations, and upon whom you can rely, take him, and he shall have my best assistance – if you depend upon some chance connection or Colonial Office Clerk, he may serve your Lordship with more untiring vigilance, a more watchful regard to your honour and interests, and a more respectful feeling of personal attachment, than I have done, but on this point I may be pardoned for having my doubts. . . . I do not believe that you ever will have a friend whose thoughts

will be more entirely engrossed by the desire to make your Administration a bright page in the history of this country.

(Howe to Falkland, n.d., *Howe Papers*, X, 19-24)

~ During the latter part of 1842 and throughout 1843 the coalition continued to decline in strength. This was particularly evident in the debate and vote on the Qualification Bill, which permitted a freeholder to contest any seat no matter where his freehold was located. The ministry sponsored the bill, and Howe gave it unstinting support because it was British and because it was implied in the new order of things he was attempting to introduce. "This bill is part of a system," he said. "Pass it and you make a step in advance; reject it and you will begin to retrograde." Nevertheless, the Assembly adopted it only by the narrow margin of 27 to 23. ~

In the United Kingdom, a man who holds a qualification in any part, may run an election in England, Ireland, or Scotland. Why should not similar privileges exist in Nova Scotia? . . . To be free of Great Britain, a man need to hold only one property qualification; to be free of Nova Scotia, with its three hundred miles of length, and its two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, a man should hold three-and-twenty freeholds. Was there anything in the country which called for that great distinction? Even if restriction were wise for an old, wealthy Colony, would it be for one like Nova Scotia? Was there anything restrictive in knowledge, statesmanship, or eloquence, which would evaporate unless a man came from a particular spot? No; and those who possessed these qualities ought to be allowed to test public opinion in any part of the country. At present, a man incapable of managing his own concerns, of addressing a sentence to the House, may hold the twenty-three freeholds; yet a man who would be an ornament and honour if selected, may be confined to a narrow space, and effectually debarred from public life. . . .

[Without the provisions of this bill Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Canning, Hume, Lord John Russell, Palmerston, and Peel would have been denied election to the Commons.] Looking back on the past, would any man wish that one of the luminaries of those times, should be excluded from public life by narrow restrictions? Would any wish to lose one brilliant speech, one admirable measure of these men? Would any, no matter of what political shade, strike from the galaxy of British talent one of its ornaments, or keep any one great man in obscurity because he

had maintained his independence, and asserted his principles? Would any wish to apply to the persons enumerated restrictions like ours? If there were one so actuated, I would tell him that under such circumstances some of the noblest flights of eloquence, some of the wisest laws, some of the most valuable expositions, would be lost to us, and lost to the country, where they are treasured in the hearts of the people.

(Speech of February 8, 1843, *Novascotian*, February 13, 1843; or Annand, I, 330-35)

~ By the end of the session of 1843 Howe told the Governor that the coalition's days were clearly numbered. ~

By the autumn [of 1842 there] had commenced a savage assault upon my private character, and the public saw paraded in a Newspaper, edited by an Officer of the Government [i.e., the Queen's Printer] every vile charge that could injure the reputation of a Member of it. I need not repeat to your Lordship what men of ordinary shrewdness said, at the time, to each other, that this would never have been done, if the sympathy and protection of my colleagues had not been taken into the calculation. I thought differently – and never harboured a suspicion injurious to any of them, until while absent from home on public business, I saw the first Law Officer of the Crown [i.e., J. W. Johnston] utterly regardless of the Government, its strength, its harmony, or the comments of the Press, stepping voluntarily into a Newspaper to lend the weight of his name to the charges preferred against me. . . .

[Then] early in November it was currently reported, that, on the appearance of the Attorney General's letter in the Newspapers, Mr. Stewart had waited on Mr. Uniacke and urged him "to embark in the same boat with himself and Mr. Johnston, form a junction between the Tories and Baptists, and throw Howe overboard," a proposition which Mr. Uniacke had indignantly rejected. This story came to my ears in a way which carried conviction of its reality stronger than I can express, but I said nothing about it, until I heard it in every corner of the street. It has circulated currently for five months – has never been contradicted – and is generally believed.

Your Lordship will perceive that here is an accumulation of evidence, gathered by the hands of others, which had reduced your Council so low in public estimation as to make it impossible that any party . . . could have placed the slightest reliance

upon its union of sentiment, or upon the respect which the Members entertained for each other. . . . At the present moment not any political newspaper supports the Government, a contrast with the aspect in September which something must have produced. . . .

[Since the latter part of the session] I have not attempted to disguise my conviction that the Administration, as at present constituted, cannot go on a great while longer. This opinion is not based on anything which appears in the Press, because we could soon place the Administration in a favourable light before the public if we could defend it, and tell the truth. . . . There is something more required to make a strong Administration than nine men, treating each other courteously at a round table – there is the assurance of good faith – towards each other – of common sentiments, and kindly feelings, propagated through the friends of each, in society, in the Legislature and in the Press, until a great party is formed acting in the spirit of which Members of government set the example, and which secures a steady working majority to sustain their policy and carry their measures. Many of my friends, for a long time, heartily exerted themselves to form such a party, but they appear to have abandoned the task in despair, and, at the moment, although all the Members of the Council have some friends, the Government, as such, apart from your Lordship's personal influence, can be said to have none.

(Howe to Falkland, April 3, 1843, *Howe Papers*, VI, 48-54)

~ The session of 1843 had produced an issue which more than any other, was to hasten the end of the coalition. Apparently with full cognizance of the explosive character of his action, Howe successfully urged the Assembly to condemn denominational colleges and to express its approval of "one good college, free from sectarian control, and open to all denominations, maintained by a common fund." "When I look abroad on the works of Providence [he said in the Legislature on March 20], I see no sectarianism in the forest or in the broad river that sparkles through the meadows, and shall we be driven to the conclusion that men cannot live together without being divided by that which ought to be a bond of Christian union?" At the same time Howe accused the Baptists of Acadia College of exhibiting as much ambition and intolerance as the Catholics whom they criticized: "If we are to have a pope, I would as soon

have one in Rome as at Horton; if persecution is to be tried, it may as well come under solemn pontificals as under a black coat and tights."

This brought him into direct conflict with the Baptists and with J. W. Johnston, who, in Professor Chester Martin's words, was "the flower of their creed and their champion," and whom they repaid with a loyalty which bordered upon fanaticism. Named Attorney-General in 1841, Johnston quickly established a commanding position in the Executive Council. For the next two decades he and Howe were the chief rivals in Nova Scotian politics. Chester Martin (*Empire and Commonwealth*, p. 206) contrasted the two thus: "Johnston's finely wrought temper, aristocratic by instinct and by education, was combined with an incorruptible character of such austerity that scandal never marred its polished surface. Howe, a child of nature, with the pent-up energies of a volcano within his mind, moved in an atmosphere of boisterous self-confidence. . . . It was known that he had fought a duel, that he had an illegitimate son, and that he was the choicest spirit in the province in that indefinable circle which Elgin once called the 'bhoys.' "

Throughout the summer of 1843 Howe expounded his views on the college question much as he did at Halifax on September 27. ~

But then these sectarian colleges are to do such great things for religion. I believe that in a short time they would banish it from the Province. One of them [Pictou Academy] kept the eastern counties in hot water for sixteen years; and another [King's] has produced more strife, division, and bad feeling than any bone of contention, religious, social or political. One thing is clear, that 800 common schools and 17 County Academies, are managed with more tranquillity . . . than a single Sectarian College. Suppose that five or six different religious bodies owned these, and each was scrambling for its own, what a scene of confusion would the education of the country exhibit. Apply the same principle which now governs our County Schools and Academies to higher Education, and peace and permanence will be the result. The People must have One College, as they have one Supreme Court; one Province Building; one Penitentiary; and if others want more, let them maintain them at their own expense.

(*Novascotian*, October 9, 1843; or Annand, I, 381-82)

~ While the question of provincial grants to denominational colleges was still being debated, and during Howe's absence from Halifax and against his written advice, Falkland dissolved the Assembly, allegedly to escape the necessity of immediately forming a Party Government. At his nomination address on November 6 Howe indicated his intention to remain in the coalition only if no party could carry on by itself after the election. ~

Howe discussed the questions of coalition and party government, stating his wish that the latter should now, after trial of the former, succeed . . . if the liberals came back with large majorities, . . . some members of the Council would retire, and if those who advised and caused the dissolution came back with a large majority of their friends, he would not retain his seat. . . . He had no objection to such a coalition government as might include some to whom he had formerly been opposed, if they acted in good faith, and on a basis of fixed public principles [but] if he continued in a coalition government, after the elections, it would be because the country decided in its favour.
(*Royal Gazette*, November 9, 1843)

~ The electors of Nova Scotia spoke with a somewhat uncertain voice; although Howe expected members of Reformist leanings to constitute at least half the Assembly, it eventually turned out that Johnston's followers had a small majority. Howe's course of action was decided for him when, in December, Falkland appointed M. B. Almon, Johnston's brother-in-law, to the Executive Council, to demonstrate his belief in a mixed administration, rather than in a party government which the Reformers were allegedly seeking to force upon him. This disproportionate weighting of the Council in the Tories' favour led to the immediate resignation of its Reform members. ~

The Elections . . . are nearly over . . . the relative strength of parties is but little changed. Huntington, Young and I will lead a clear half of the House. . . . Lord F. has done a foolish act, the first in three years, as a Governor. He is very anxious to preserve the Coalition and keep his present Council, and don't [*sic*] want either party to be strong enough to exclude the other. . . . Have no fears about me as Lord F. will do nothing personally unkind to me and the House is so constituted that my enemies cannot.

Friday evening,
22 Decr. 1843.

Since the foregoing was written strange things have occurred here.... Uniacke, McNab and I resigned our seats in Council on Thursday with our offices. The sacrifice was great, but called for by circumstances. The moral elevation it has given us ensures our ultimate triumph. Both Young, Doyle, Huntington, and a majority of the House are with us and we shall beat the fellows out in a week after the House meets. . . . A gentleman was sent to me today to tender me a year's salary as a present from my Constituents, which, of course I declined. Have no fears – all will be right, and our position stronger than ever. We parted with the Governor on good terms – he acted foolishly, but will soon get sick of the mess in which he has been involved.

(Letter to half-sister, December, 1843, *Howe Letters*, pp. 39-40)

3. SUCCESS WITHOUT VIOLENCE: "NOT A PANE OF GLASS BROKEN"

~ From his resignation in 1843 to the general election of August, 1847, Howe devoted all his energies to making the Reformers the majority party in Nova Scotia. His own description of his activities, which he wrote for the Annand volumes, follows. ~

Nothing could exceed the buoyant and cheerful spirit with which Mr. Howe applied himself to the task which he had assumed, of routing Lord Falkland, and his government, horse, foot, and artillery, at the next election. In the darkest hour he never despaired. He played through labours multifarious, and which, to a person of different temperament and training, would have been irksome. His armchair became the centre and rallying point of the whole party. Our [i.e., Annand's and Howe's] office was rarely empty; his house, when at home, never. We have often seen him dashing off an editorial, which was to set the whole Province laughing or thinking, surrounded by a mob of friends planning some movement or preparing for some meeting. We have known him work when he was weary; inspire others with cheerfulness, when his heart was sad; and he thought as little of galloping over two or three counties, and addressing half-a-dozen public meetings, as others would think of a drive round "the Point."

(Annand, I, 414-15)

~ To a leading Canadian politician, Francis Hincks, Howe outlined the basic objective of the Nova Scotian Reformers: to

require the major office-holders who advised the Governor to possess the confidence of a majority of the Assembly. ~

The true principles upon which patronage should be dispensed I take to be these: the Sovereign is bound to bestow all offices for the general good without reference to party; but as no single mind can decide in all cases what is for the general good, and as a majority of the people's Representatives are assumed to reflect the wishes, and best understand the true interest of the people, the Crown selects advisers from that majority, and takes their advice in the distribution of patronage. So long as these men really reflect the national sentiment and feeling, it would be most unwise to patronize those who oppose them, and give offices to those who have mistaken the real interests of the country or failed to carry with them the sympathies and confidence of the people. To give force and efficacy to the national will – harmony and vigour to the national councils, public confidence should govern political appointments, and, in order that there may be the necessary firmness and stability in Government, those who conduct it should have their hands strengthened by the Sovereign or the Governor they serve, down to the moment when they are to be dismissed, for some good reason, justifying a reconstruction or an appeal to the constituency, or in obedience to the declared wishes of Parliament.

(Howe to Hincks, April 29, 1844, *Novascotian*, May 27, 1844; or Annand, II, 326)

~ Howe was certain that, just as any past gains in the direction of responsibility had been won by the colonials themselves, so the ultimate victory would be due to their efforts. ~

The learned member [Mr. Wilkins] told us that the constitution of Nova Scotia was the work of a Colonial Secretary. I deny the fact. Our Constitution was worked out on the floor of this House by the conflict of Colonial opinion, by the energy and sagacity of Nova-Scotians themselves, aided by a combination of circumstances in the other Colonies. Lord Glenelg never yielded one concession till it was asked by this Assembly; Lord John Russell wrote no Despatches not based on our Constitutional demands; and Lord Sydenham worked out the new system by and with the aid of the leading minds in this Assembly. Nor can a Colonial Secretary destroy our Constitution – it will be

guarded, expanded and preserved, by successive generations of intelligent men, in spite of the unnatural attempts of such persons as the learned member for Hants [Mr. Wilkins]. . . .

Sir, I respect Colonial Secretaries and Members of Parliament, but I abhor that spirit of tuft hunting toadyism, which leads some persons to seek for infallible wisdom under a Coronet, and to undervalue everything in our own Country, and to worship what comes from abroad.

(Speech of February 5, 1846, in *Novascotian*, February 16, 1846; or Annand, I, 519-25)

~ No one was more aware than Howe that, to achieve his ends, he must make the Liberal party a more disciplined body and hence reduce its dependence on the "loose fish." Yet, as a liberal, he had qualms about how far he might go in this direction. ~

Nugent [to whom he had sold the *Novascotian*] was for reducing the liberal party to a solid compact body of fighting men, armed and disciplined after the most approved fashion, and driving all the loose fish into the opposite ranks; forgetting that the very qualities and training which makes us liberals, forbids a too rigid obedience to party discipline – and forgetting also that the Battle of Bannockburn was half won by the camp followers.

(*Novascotian*, May 6, 1844)

~ Nonetheless, through Howe's efforts the Liberal party quickly assumed a real coherence, and none was more elated than he at the size and quality of its membership. He indicated his satisfaction at a dinner in Cumberland County in October, 1844. ~

In [Halifax County], as elsewhere, I perceive that the Tory party are chiefly made up of a few of the very rich, operating upon the fears, or the interests, or the ignorance of the poor. The liberal party here, as elsewhere, embraces the sturdy independence and agricultural wealth of the country. It is often said by our opponents that they own Nova Scotia, and that the liberals are almost intruders upon the soil, and unfit to interfere in public affairs. But is this arrogant boast founded in fact? In the whole island of Cape Breton scarcely one hundred Tories can be found, and these chiefly cluster around the villages, and live by the professions or the offices which the people are taxed to support. Who cultivate and own the soil of Cape Breton?

Who owns the vessels? who catch the fish? who carry on the trade? The liberals, and the only member from the island who supports the present Government is compelled to acknowledge that his constituents differ with him in opinion. Turning to Guysborough we find that the man who came in at the head of the poll is a liberal, and that the farmers of St. Mary's, who did not vote for him before, have come forward to tender him their independent support because of his opposition to the present Government. The county of Sydney, which contains the finest upland in the Province, is all our own; there are not a dozen Tories in it. And in Pictou we have the vast majority of those who read and speak English, including a large proportion of the most skilful and extensive proprietors; the most enterprising shipowners and wealthy merchants. Do the fifteen hundred good men and true in Colchester own no property? Yes, in that county, as in Kings and Hants, those who are with us own a vast proportion of the broad acres – the real estate; the sure foundation of independent feeling and liberal sentiment. The traders, and attorneys, and officials, or a majority of them, may be against us, but the sturdy yeomanry, the real aristocracy are with us. The same may be said of Digby, Yarmouth, and Shelburne, where but one Tory has been able to find a seat; and yet in the face of these acknowledged facts, we are told that the liberals have no stake in Nova Scotia, and that the preponderance of wealth, moral feeling, and intelligence are on the other side. Why, even in the capital, with all their boasted resources, what is the true state of the case? The Tories have some very wealthy men, a good many that have accumulated property, but what then? Within the last twenty years, slowly and steadily, industrious and intelligent men, professing liberal opinions, have raised themselves to independence and many of them to affluence. The Tories have more wealth in few hands; ours is spread over the mass, and is scarcely less in amount than theirs; while in productive power, in general industry and frugality, we possess elements which, in a very short time will make all the boasted hoards of the Tories kick the beam. Can the government of this country go on, and a body like this be excluded from all influence when they own three-fourths of the territory and pay three-fourths of the taxes?

(Annand, I, 430-31)

~ Howe's confidence that Falkland could never be unkind to him soon proved to be misplaced. The Governor had come to

Nova Scotia as a genuine liberal, and in his early years his attitude towards the "official clique" in Halifax was no less contemptuous than Howe's own.

The accession of the Tories to office in Britain in September, 1841, weakened Falkland's position, for the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, made it clear that he was to resist the introduction of "party government." Falkland's fears that the Reformers were trying to force party government upon him led him to commit what Howe termed his only errors in three years. But the resultant resignation of the three Reform Councillors produced the very result he was trying to avoid – party government – and it was little more palatable because the new Assembly sustained J. W. Johnston and his Tory councillors by a small majority.

Desperately trying to extricate himself from his predicament, Falkland offered to take back the retired councillors in February, 1844, but on conditions unacceptable to them. Howe made a counter-offer which the Governor angrily rejected with the declaration that henceforth there would be war to the knife between them. The manner in which Falkland conveyed these events to the Colonial Secretary became all too apparent when Stanley congratulated him for "resisting the pretensions of the retired councillors."

Meanwhile, war had begun, as the *Morning Post*, under the editorship of the Queen's Printer, J. H. Croskill, embarked on a campaign of scurrility and vilification against Howe and the leading Reformers. Earlier (December 30, 1841), after Howe had assumed the burdens of Member of the Executive Council and Speaker of the Assembly, he had, with great regret, sold the *Novascotian*. In the circumstances which existed in May, 1844, he was elated to take over the editorship of the *Novascotian* and the *Morning Chronicle*. ~

Had a fair and just compromise been made by the Lieutenant-Governor, during any one of a dozen opportunities that were presented during the last Session, so sick, were we of the ceaseless strife, heartless insincerity, and barren rewards of Colonial public life, that we would have cheerfully retired to more tranquil pursuits, and abandoned any claims that we might have been supposed to have, either upon the Country or the Government. But, what we would have done cheerfully for the sake of peace, we are not disposed to do under compulsion. . . .

They might have had peace; let them prepare for war. . . . Hardly had we taken our seat upon our old acquaintance, when we fancied that ten thousand ties which formerly linked our name and daily labours with the household thoughts and fireside amusements of our countrymen, aye, and countrywomen, were revived, as if by magic; we stepped across their thresholds, mingled in their social circles, went with them to the woods to enliven their labours, or to the field to shed a salutary influence over their mid-day meal. And we had the vanity to believe, that we would be everywhere a welcome guest; that the people would say, "why, here is Howe amongst us again; not Mr. Speaker Howe, not the Hon. Mr. Howe, but Joe Howe, as he used to be, sitting in his Editorial chair, and talking to us about politics, and trade, and agriculture – about our own country and other countries; making us laugh a good deal, but think a good deal more, even while we were laughing." Such is the reception we anticipate – homely but hearty; and we can assure our countrymen, that we fall back among them, conscious that there is no name by which we have been known of late years, among the dignitaries of the land, that we prize so highly, as the old familiar abbreviation; and no field of labour more honourable, than that which we formerly cultivated, with so large a share of approbation, and upon which we are entering again. . . .

We expect no speedy change, no sudden triumph; the present state of things will probably have to get worse before it is much better. From the present House, or rather from the small majority who support the present Government we expect nothing – we fearlessly rely upon the intelligence and firmness of the People, and we look forward to the next Election, when the Constituency, having the two sets of men and their acts and principles, fairly before them, will decide which of them is to enjoy their confidence, and guide the administration of their affairs. . . . To rouse, to inform, to organize the 200,000 People who compose the Liberal party; to put them in a position to rebuke the sneers of Tory attorneys, to restrain the arbitrary exercise of the Prerogative, to make their voices heard, not only in the Legislative Halls, but also in the Councils of their Country with a weight and authority that cannot be misunderstood; this shall be our task.

(*Novascotian*, May 6, 1844)

~ None, knowing Howe, could have expected him to tolerate

indefinitely the outpouring of the *Post*. Within weeks the *Novascotian* and the *Morning Chronicle* were replying in kind with lampoons and pasquinades, some of which reflected on the Governor himself. One entitled "The Lord of the Bed-Chamber" particularly horrified the Tory element by referring to Falkland "sitting in his shirt." Chester Martin (*Empire and Commonwealth*, p. 217) stated that this barbarous type of warfare "embittered [Howe's] most cherished memories, coarsened his nature, and stained his name; lost him perhaps the first premiership under responsible government overseas in 1848, and in the end contributed not a little to fasten upon him the cardinal sin of indiscretion that barred him from the career he coveted beyond his native province." This is undoubtedly going too far. Certainly a later day would look far more kindly on pasquinades like the following, of which Howe was undoubtedly the author. ~

Private and Confidential
From L–d F–d to L–d S–Y

My Lord,

By this mail, *which I have not detain'd*,
A few lines, mark'd *private*, to write I'm constrain'd.
In my public dispatch, my position, en beau,
Is set off to the greatest advantage you know;
When you read it you'll think I have nothing to bore me,
But am driving Bluenoses, like poultry, before me.
I'm sorry to own, yet the fact must be stated,
The game is all up, and I'm fairly check-mated.
The Poacher in Chaucer, with goose in his breeches,
Was betrayed by the neck peeping through the loose
stitches;
And I must acknowledge, unfortunate sinner,
As my griefs are enlarging, my breeches get thinner;
And I feel, if I do not soon make a clean breast,
That, from what you observe, you will guess at the rest.

But while talking of geese, it is said, in some ruction,
That Rome, by their cackling, was sav'd from destruction –
The luck of the Roman runs not in my line,
For I am destroyed by the cackling of mine. . . .

There's J – n, the costive, when spinning a yarn,
On the floor of the House, or the floor of a barn,

Excels in the fine arts of canting and prosing,
And never can see when his audience are dozing:
The extent of his *labor* no midwife can guess,
When the wearisome after-birth spreads o'er the Press. . . .

But the plague of my life is a genius I bought –
(I'm indebted to Stewart for the unlucky thought,)
In mischief laborious – in judgment deficient –
In the slang of all despots a slavish proficient;
As a dog is with hairs, so he's cover'd with lies –
If he touches a flower, it fades or it dies:
Like an issue, first opened the patient to save,
But which festers and runs till he reaches the grave,
This fellow exhausts me – I'm thin as a ghost,
While detaining the *Mails*, and maintaining the *Post*.

My L – d, if I wrote this as long as a lecture,
One half of my cares you could never conjecture:
Only think how my feelings are wounded and hurt,
By having a reference made to my "shirt" –
Among ignorant people, so soft, that before, one
In ten hardly knew that a nobleman wore one.
The "Prerogative's" safe, as the talent we're told of,
Which the idle and profitless steward got hold of,
Wrapt up in a napkin, it "lies" on my table,
But to make any use of 't I own I'm unable. . . .

And that strange fellow Howe, though I've tried to
destroy him
(I wish from my soul that I yet could employ him),
Goes laughingly telling the truth o'er the land,
Till the storm ranges round me on every hand –
And the people, beginning to take my dimensions,
But smile at my pride and resist my "pretensions."
Have pity, my Lord, and, if possible, aid me,
I know at the Clubs they will laugh and upbraid me;
But if in the East you can stow me away,
Of your temporal welfare I'll think, when I pray –
And blunder no more, with my temper contrary,
But behave myself better,

Your friend
L–s C–y.

(*Novascotian*, November 25, 1844; or Annand, II, 547-48)

~ Falkland renewed his overtures to the Reformers in the summer of 1845, insisting, however, that Howe must be excluded from the Executive Council because of his conduct toward the Queen's Representative. Not only was the Governor unsuccessful, but his subsequent conduct indicated that he had lost all perspective. In writing to Lord Stanley, he even transgressed the truth in suggesting that Howe's colleagues were prepared to abandon him. For this statement Howe accused the Governor of violating all the decencies of public life. In defending his own conduct on February 13, 1845, he regretted this "disgraceful" page in Nova Scotian history, but placed the blame fairly and squarely on Falkland himself. ~

When, a few days ago, I found myself denounced and proscribed, in the Documents sent down by the Lieutenant Governor, I felt like a Traveller overtaken by a storm; who, with the thunder rolling above his head, the lightning flashing in his eye, finding the earth trembling beneath his feet, pauses to reflect why the Gods should be angry with him. For a moment he is staggered; but, looking into his own breast, where all is peace and sunshine, he views the storm with indifference, conscious that, however foul the vapours that surround him, the rattling of the elements will but purify the air, and ensure health and safety when their fury is exhausted. . . .

The feature which mainly distinguishes the policy of the Opposition in Nova Scotia, from that of the gentlemen who now surround his Excellency, is this – we hold that the Queen's Representative, responsible to the Colonial Secretary for the due maintenance of the Prerogative, for our obedience to Imperial laws, and for the good government of the country, should yet be held so far above the strife and conflict of party, as to seek only the general good, regardless of likes and dislikes, of personal enmities or predilections. Thus holding a high position, with the balance of parties in his hand, a just and wise Governor would be powerful for all good purposes, and would find Nova Scotians but too happy to rally round and to aid him, when appealed to, against factions on either side. Our opponents, on the other hand, charging upon us an exaggerated application of the principle that the Governor can do no wrong, which we deny, are never so happy as when they can prove him capable of wrong doing, by involving him in personal conflicts with which he has nothing to do, and driving him into the

meshes of their own party, by a course of insult, or proscription, of those who, by no constitutional weapon, could they overpower. . . .

Sir, when I look back upon the past, and address myself to the labours of this day, in self-defence, I would gladly blot out this disgraceful page from our Provincial history. . . . I trust I shall be able to show, that I bore with exemplary patience much undeserved provocation; that while I was for months only intent on serving and extricating Lord Falkland from his embarrassments, a very different spirit was active on the other side; and then when, for the defence of my principles, and my friends, I took up my pen on the 6th of May, it was not till the officers of his Government, and his intimate associates, had showered lampoons and libels on me for more than four months. . . . [Howe admitted that he had authorized the publication of "The Lord of the Bed-Chamber."] If the writer has gone too far, let Gentlemen, bear in mind the extent of the provocation. Let it not be said that Lord Falkland and his Advisers were not answerable for what appeared in *The Morning Post* – that paper was edited and owned by the Printer of *The Gazette*. The Government had the command and direction of both. If a person kept a Brothel, and a Boarding House, under the same roof, and if the former was a nuisance to the neighbourhood, could those who frequented, and patronized, and encouraged the Proprietor, plead that they were only accountable for what was done in a single suite of apartments? I think not – and acting on this principle, I have claimed my right to hold the Lieutenant Governor personally responsible for all the defamation published by the Organs of his Government by his paid official servant. . . .

I have contended – I am now contending – for Principles, for a System, which I believe, if worked out with discretion and good faith, will bind these Colonies to the Parent State for a century to come. It is because these principles have been violated, because their old enemies are in power, that I am in Opposition. It is because, in departing from the principles, and in attempting to proscribe a British subject, that I have been driven to this defence.

(*Morning Chronicle*, February 18, 20, and 22, 1845; or Annand, I, 445-76)

~ Falkland had not yet learned his lesson. Early in the session of 1846 despatches were tabled in which he condemned two

assemblymen, Speaker William Young and his brother, George R. Young, for being the associates of "reckless" and "insolvent" men. ~

Howe immediately entered his protest against the infamous system pursued . . . by which the names of respectable Colonists were libelled in despatches, sent to the Colonial Office, to be afterwards published here, and by which any brand or stigma might be placed upon them without their having any means of redress. If that system was continued, some Colonist would, by and bye, or he was much mistaken, hire a black fellow to horsewhip a Lieutenant Governor.

(*Novascotian*, February 23, 1846; or Annand, I, 529)

~ For this language Howe was censured, but he defended himself vigorously in a letter to the Freeholders of the County of Halifax. ~

[Why did he do what he did?] Because I wanted to startle – to rouse – to flash the light of truth over every hideous feature of the system. The fire-bell startles at night, but if it rings not, the town may be burned; and wise men seldom vote him an incendiary who pulls the rope, and who could not give the alarm, and avert the calamity, unless he makes a noise. The prophet's style was quaint, and picturesque, when he compared the great King to a sheep stealer; but the object was not to insult the King, it was to make him think – to rouse him – to let him see, by the light of a poetic fancy, the gulf to which he was descending that he might thereafter love mercy, walk humbly, and, controlling his passions, keep untarnished the lustre of the Crown. David let other men's wives alone after that flight of Nathan's imagination – and I will venture to say that whenever, hereafter, our rulers desire to grille a political opponent in an Official Despatch, they will recall my homely picture, and borrow wisdom from the past.

(*Novascotian*, February 23, 1846)

~ A month later, after the *Morning Post* had described Howe as a place-hunting mendicant, the Governor was made to squirm again. ~

My Lord,

An Officer of your Government, with your Lordship's sanction and approval – an Officer appointed by your Lordship, and

rewarded for his services by large emoluments, commenced slandering me about two years ago, and has continued the practice ever since. . . . I found [the weapon of this bravo] glancing off my ribs, but a very few days after I sat at your Lordship's board, beneath your own roof, secure in the belief that the honourable relations of the past, no less than the courteous usages of the Mother Country, protected me from assassination. I was mistaken: and, more in sorrow than in anger, cautioned your Lordship to conduct your Administration with more dignity and prudence, not sullying your noble name with dirty work or dirty instruments. . . . The warning was unheeded, and your Lordship took, in good earnest, to sowing wind, and you have been reaping the whirlwind ever since. . . .

I am "a place hunting mendicant!" am I, my Lord? . . . I have been eighteen years a public man, and never asked a place. I held one under your Government for a short period, and gave it up when it could no longer be held with honour. But I gave your Lordship two of the best years of my life without place or emolument, and served my Sovereign for nothing from 1840 to 1842, you receiving £7,000 for your service during the same time. If I then am a place hunter, who held one but sixteen months in eighteen years – who received that one without asking, and yielded it up without regret, what are you, my Lord? You have held places for many years – how won I know not; but the public services by which they were obtained are yet to be recorded. As respects Nova Scotia, before whose people these epithets have been applied to me, let me say, that you have held office here for six years, at a cost to my countrymen of some £20,000, to whose Treasury you never contributed, while I, who have been paying taxes among them all my life, have held place but a few months, and received about a thirteenth part of that sum. Yet your minion reproaches me with place hunting! forgetting another curious contrast, that I retired with my party, while you held on when yours threw up the reins, and changed your policy that you might hold your "place". . . .

But I am "a mendicant," if not a place hunter. I assume, from various similar attacks, that the foundation of this charge arises from the voluntary determination of my friends to defeat the machinations of my enemies – from the acceptance on my part, of a gift, neither craved nor desired, but pressed upon me by a body of public spirited men, as a reward for past services

which they chose to appreciate, and without touching or impairing my independence for the future. Such gifts have been very common within the Empire, and have usually been construed to confer honour on both parties. . . . Nelson received presents from Foreign powers, and from half the great cities he defended; yet Nelson was no "mendicant". . . . Who but a narrow minded skeptic – an unbeliever in all the generous emotions which sweeten life, and lead to high achievement, would imagine that the recipients, in these cases, were "mendicants"? . . .

[His friends had said:] "Go into no more Councils – and take no more offices – waste the flower of your life for no more Governors, friend Howe. Serve your country, as you have ever served her. A sum, equal to the salary you have thrown up, shall be paid to you by the people of Nova Scotia, and we shall collect and secure it." This offer was again and again pressed upon me, by earnest minded men, accustomed to keep their words, and some of whom, my Lord, could purchase your whole estate. . . . Now, my Lord, had such an offer as this been made to you, or to any Falkland of the line, for the last century, by the citizens of London and of Bristol, would it have been refused? . . . A permanent allowance was declined, or any gift which should hamper my freedom of action for the future. But, to show my sense of their kindness – to prove to them that there was no poor pride at the bottom of the business, on my part – to show to those who might perhaps tread my path in future, that the unpurchaseable faith, and open purses of the people, could sustain Colonists against injustice and oppression, I consented to accept a sum, not nearly so large as I had lost while attending to your Lordship's business instead of my own and less than some friends of yours have received, for doing almost nothing, year by year, out of the resources of this people, as far back as my memory extends.

Such is the transaction, my Lord . . . your paid official servant has misrepresented day by day. It is one in which I and my family take much pride. We would rather eat bread at the hands of our friends, in honest heartiness and mutual sympathy, than at the hands of our enemies, and the enemies of our country, purchased by mean compliance and treachery to the land we love. But, my Lord, though the generous thoughtfulness of these men will never be forgotten – though the reality of their friendship has been tested, and the extent of their resources is

well known, I have been accustomed to earn my bread since I was a child, and am teaching my children to do the same; and, my Lord, it strikes me that if you were stripped of what you never earned, we should still have bread, with some to spare to the mendicants over the way.

(*Novascotian*, March 16, 1846; or Annand, II, 340-44)

~ When Howe again retired from the editorship of the *Novascotian* in April, 1846, and moved to a farm on the Musquodoboit, he could not resist a parting injunction to Falkland. ~

I am about "to retire from the metropolis, and turn up the soil of Musquodoboit." With this number my connection with the press ceases for the present; but be comforted, I shall not be so far away but that we can't "take sweet counsel" together. I shall be a peaceful agriculturalist, no doubt; but hark ye, my Lord, in order that we may be good friends you had better keep your pigs out of my garden and not attempt to plant tares among my wheat.

(*Novascotian*, April 13, 1846; or Chisholm, I, 608)

~ Only once during these years did Howe's spirits fall; that was in March or April 1846, about the time that he gave up the editorship. One of his letters indicates that he was altogether disheartened by his lack of support from his Reform colleagues. ~

Personal vexations I could bear with good humoured philosophy if these were inevitable, and if the cause prospered in proportion as these accumulated. But this is not the case, and therefore, I feel that to break my own heart, while everybody else does what seems right in his own eyes, or does nothing, or does worse, is to waste life with very little purpose. You know what Nelson felt, when serving under Parker in the North – you know what a Spaniard feels when abandoning an ill-regulated Army in the plain, and taking to the hills, he becomes a guerilla. I obey the signals, *when any are hoisted* – I still stick by the Army in the plain, but I must confess I am heartily sick of the service.

You will understand all this, by reference to a few facts: It is now about 27 months since we retired, during which I believe I have written as many quires in illustration of our views and politics and position, either in the Newspapers or to leading men in the Counties. With the exception of a few articles by George

Young, and a few more by Doyle, not a man of our party in the House has written a line. This I would not mind, did they not shrink from all responsibility, when they are defended. Johnston, a fortnight ago, boldly stood up, and defended Croskill – bragging of the service he had rendered. When the Novascotian and Chronicle were assailed not one Liberal in the House justified or defended me, and several timidly declared they never wrote in Newspapers. Is it then to be wondered at, that, of late, I should study, and *not write*?

Again – to prepare and organize a County I attend 24 meetings. They are openly discountenanced, if not secretly disapproved and denounced by most of those who might be expected to participate in the responsibility and glory in the results. While attending one of these, my friends combined with my enemies to give me a kick. Can I be expected to attend another meeting or stir one step out of town on such fools errands?

Falkland proscribes me by name in 5 notes. Not one of my friends protests against the act in their answers. He insults the Speaker and myself and other persons and their families on our account. Our party show their sympathy by going to dine with him, and I resent their conduct by defending every man of them in the House and out of it, when a hair of their heads is touched.

The most despicable intrigue having failed I and others are gibbetted in Despatches, and these are received with "bated breath," although they fasten treachery on one member – disloyalty on another – and poltroonery on others. . . .

The Speaker and his Brother are slandered. I resent it, keeping strictly within rule. The Speaker takes care to tell the House "he was thunderstruck," and one of our Leaders moves a Resolution, which but for the blundering folly of the Administration in not accepting it, would have been a unanimous censure of the whole House. The men insulted then come in, and then after boasting what they are going to do, eat their leeks and do nothing.

Can it be wondered at that I should be sick of such a position, and such party operations? I often feel that I should be safer, and quite as useful, if I stood alone – and, if things go on as they have been going, I should either take that position or quit public life.

(Howe to Leishman, n.d., *Howe Papers*, VI, 110-11)

~ Falkland left Nova Scotia, undoubtedly with great relief, in August, 1846. His successor, Sir John Harvey, proposed a *bona fide* coalition on the Sydenham model. But Howe and his colleagues declined any course of action which might imply an abandonment of their principles. Howe suggested, instead, an early dissolution. ~

Political principles, and the rights of vast bodies of people, are involved in the present struggle. For any man to abandon, or sacrifice these, after a ten years' contest, is for him to declare himself infamous, and to earn the character of an apostate and a deserter. . . .

Your Excellency desire[s] the support of the Liberal Party . . . but a regard to consistency and honour renders it impossible for them to coalesce with certain other individuals whose principles and acts, developed in a series of years, they heartily disapprove. No lapse of time can shake this determination. To a fair reconstruction of the Council, after an appeal to the country, they can present no obstacle, because the judgment of the constituency will decide, and lead to the final adjustment of nearly all the questions that divide them from their opponents. But should your Excellency determine to settle nothing – to go on, surrounded by, and "identified" with Lord Falkland's advisers – a stormy session, fruitless of good measures, but marked by exciting appeals to the country, is before us. . . . If a strong administration be formed now, either before or after the dissolution of the House, a year will have been saved.

(Memorandum of Howe to Harvey, September 16, 1846, *Novascotian*, February 15, 1847)

~ In more forceful terms Howe explained to his Newfoundland friend John Kent why a coalition was out of the question. ~

Sir John [Harvey], after deliberating for three months, has determined to meet the old House, with the old Council. He has been trying to form a Coalition, and still hopes to force it. We are in for six or eight months of battling and trouble during which three fourths of the population will learn to suspect and dislike him, and when the Tories are turned out, as they must be after the Elections, their policy will be to involve him, if possible, in their own misfortune. The time for seduction, intrigue, and splitting of parties, after the French fashion, has gone by in Nova Scotia. . . .

I do not, in the abstract disapprove of Coalitions, where public exigencies, or an equal balance of parties creates a necessity for them, but hold, that, when formed, the Members should act in good faith, and treat each other like gentlemen – should form a party, in fact, and take the field against all other parties without. If they quarrel and fight, and knock the Coalition to smithereens, then a Governor who attempts to compel men who cannot eat together, and who are animated by mutual distrust, to serve in the same Cabinet, and bullies them if they refuse, is mad. A Coalition, like a marriage, may turn out well, if there is mutual forbearance, respect, and singleness, of view, but if the woman be "taken in adultery," surely the person who performs the ceremony, has no right to horsewhip the man for refusing to live with her again.

(Howe to Kent, November 28, 1846, *Howe Papers*, VI, 97-99)

~ For the Reformers coalition was now all the more unpalatable because victory appeared to be in sight. In July, 1846, a Whig government with Lord John Russell as Prime Minister and Lord Grey as Colonial Secretary, took office in Britain. Howe's English counterpart in the reform of the colonial governments, Charles Buller, wrote that England at last had a Colonial Secretary who had sound views of Colonial Policy; in his reply Howe warned of the consequence of inaction. ~

[The changes in government] have diffused general joy over North America. The great body of the People are pleased and hopeful – the cliques and compacts . . . are in despair; . . . we all believe that in the hands of Lord John Russell and Earl Grey, aided by such men as Mr. Hawes and yourself, we are safe to the full extent that the interests of our people can be wisely dealt with by Statesmen afar off, unaided by fellow workers, drawn from the Colonies. The want of this, beside you, is our only ground of apprehension.

(Howe to Buller, September 16, 1846, *Howe Papers*, VI, 76)

The men who drove the old Colonies to desperation, thought Jefferson, and Franklin, and Washington, very inferior to the merest drivellers by whom they were surrounded, and now we suppose the prevailing idea, at home is, that, though "there were giants in those days," the race is extinct. God send them all more wisdom – if this Whig government disappoints us, you will have the questions I have touched discussed in a different spirit, ten

years hence, by the Enemies of England, not by her friends.

(Howe to Buller, October 28, 1846, *Howe Papers*, VI, 81-82)

~ In the autumn of 1846 Howe directed a second series of letters to Lord John Russell in which, among other things, he outlined the mechanics by which the Reformers' aims might be realized. ~

Some are of opinion, that self-government should be secured to these Provinces by Act of Parliament; but there is no necessity for this. You have no Act of Parliament to define the duty of the Sovereign when ministers are in a minority; we want none to enable us to suggest to a Governor when his advisers have lost the confidence of our colonial Assemblies. But what we do want, my Lord, is a rigid enforcement of British practice, by the imperial authorities, on every Governor; the intelligence and public spirit of the people will supply the rest. Leave the representatives of Her Majesty free to select their advisers from any of the parties which exist in the countries they govern; but let it be understood that they must hold the balance even; that they must not become partisans themselves; and that then, when from incapacity, personal quarrel or want of tact, they are unable to fill up the chief offices, secure the supplies, and conduct the Government with efficiency by the aid of a good working majority, their removal will be the inevitable result.

(*Novascotian*, January 4 and 11, 1847; or Annand, II, 353-54)

~ From mid-1844 on Howe had sensed that the people of Nova Scotia were with him. ~

The rising of a people is like the rising of the Nile. You may calculate upon both with some degree of faith, and strong assurance that natural causes and impulse will produce an unvarying result, but yet *until there is a perceptible elevation of the waters*, or outpouring of the feelings, those *whose life's labours depend upon the inundation* may be pardoned some degree of anxiety, and excuse for delaying to inform their friends at a distance, that the crop is sure.

I have been for eight months very like an Egyptian, for if the People, at this crisis, had been sluggish and indifferent, incapable of appreciating the sacrifices made for them, or timid and inert, there would have been not only an end to all honorable employment in the service of the country, for a series of years, but what would have been worse, the old system would have

been practically re-established with the consent of the People themselves, and Howe and his Responsible Government, like the old Philosopher and his Eureka, in the Last of the Barons, would have been laughed at merely because those whose happiness was involved in a principle they did not sufficiently comprehend allowed the hand of power to smash the machinery before the principle was sufficiently developed. . . . Since last March I have been like a person in a seafight all the time, smothered in the smoke and deafened with the roar of battle, giving and getting hard knocks all the time and not quite sure that a letter to his friends might not be all lies, *if he wrote it too soon* because there was still a doubt as to *which ship was going to sink.*

I wrote you a month ago that the smoke was clearing away and that I could see daylight all round me, you may judge of what I have borne, when I assure you *that I wrote the moment I did see daylight* – and that however hopeful my spirit and righteous my cause, "shadows, clouds and darkness" rested upon the whole scene – until after the close of the summer session, but that now there is full and perfect day. My countrymen are with me, and for aught else I care not – with me as unanimously and affectionately as in 1836 or 1840, and are conducting themselves with a spirit and intelligence which will entitle them still to take rank in advance of all British America. . . .

You will perceive therefore, that the worst that can happen us now, will be the Government staggering on for another session or two, but this, in the present state of public feeling, I think barely possible. The first appeal to the People will set all to rights, and in the meantime we are sustained by the assurance of their cordial and enthusiastic sympathy. *The waters have risen and there will be corn in Egypt yet.*

(Howe to half-sister, September 22, 1844, *Howe Letters*, p. 44)

~ In his speeches throughout the province Howe exhibited once again his extraordinary faculty for adapting his remarks to a specific audience. This is demonstrated by his addresses to the Germans of Lunenburg on October 20, 1845, and the negroes of Preston in May, 1847. ~

I have been told . . . that it was useless to come here; that the Germans loved not free discussion, that they could not understand me, that they were deeply prejudiced, and that they venerated Tories as some of the heathen nations venerated the

Ape. Can this be true? . . . Does the old German blood lose its generous and ennobling qualities when it circulates through a Nova-Scotian's veins? Have you the industry, the frugality, the honesty of fatherland, yet lack its love of light – its patriotic ardour – its aspirations after knowledge – its devotion to rational liberty? Forbid it heaven! The German an enemy to free discussion! That would be strange indeed. Who, when the world was shrouded in darkness, when knowledge was confined to the student's cell, and free discussion was a crime, first invented the Printing Press? A German. Where is that precious relic of human ingenuity and intelligence, still preserved? In a German City beneath the shadow of the noble hills of the vine clad and abounding Rhine. The Germans Tories the subservient tools of bad men in power! It may be so, and yet I read in history, that when Europe groaned beneath the feudal system – when each mail clad Baron built his castle on the rock, and harassed the peasant, and levied contributions on the merchant, it was to German energy, and courage, and intellect that Europe owed its freedom. Then it was that the free cities of Germany formed that noble league, combining all who lived by labour against those who lived by rapine, and battering about their oppressors' ears the strong holds of Toryism, whose ruins survive, but to decorate the scenes they no longer overawe.

(*Morning Chronicle*, October 28, 1845; or Annand, I, 516-17)

You were stuck down here, in the good old Tory times, on little ten acre lots of land, while two families were consuming some 60 acres a day. This would have been bad enough if all the land had been good, but much of it was swamp and barren. Here you were left on these miserable locations, while one member of council got his grant of 5,000, and another of 10,000 acres – until the Morrises and the Crawleys obtained a monopoly of the whole. But did they give you titles? No – you had no grants – you were mere tenants of the Crown. When did you get them? When that great scoundrel, Joe Howe, got into the Council; when the Liberals, who you are told are going to make slaves of you, for the first time acquired Executive influence. One of our first acts was to obtain for you free of cost, one general grant confirming your titles, and making you proprietors instead of tenants of the Crown. You remember the day when I came up here with the grant in my hand (Cries of we remember). . . .

Again, my friends, during all the 36 years that you have lived in Nova Scotia, did you ever hear of a coloured man being on a Jury until the year before last? (Cries of no – never). Well – you see them on juries now. How does this happen? Because, formerly the Tories violated the law, and did not place upon the Jury lists all those who possessed the requisite qualifications; the coloured people were all excluded, the great body of the Catholics were excluded, the Liberals of all denominations were treated with equal injustice. But, we determined no longer to submit. The grievance was attacked in the Press, at Public Meetings, in the Legislature. The Tories resisted, as usual, but were beaten, and you, my friends, obtained this high privilege – this mark of a true Briton – with no thanks to them. Tell them that, when they bother you again. (We will – we will).

But, my friends, there is one advantage that I sought for you, which I never could obtain. I think I can see approaching the day when that may be secured. No white man, in this country, however frugal and industrious, can live on ten acres of land. The Government of this Province owes to you a debt of justice. . . . I have never ridden through your settlements without declaring the consequence of *this original sin of the Tories towards the coloured population*. Had they given you Lands, by this time you would have been independent Farmers above the reach of want, and but little liable to corruption. To remedy this evil, you know that I long ago moved the Government here, and memorialized the Colonial Secretary. I have not been successful yet, but the Liberals have given the Land system a sifting of late, which I hope will clear your way to some measure of justice hereafter.

(*Novascotian*, May 10 and 17, 1847)

~ In his Letter to the Freeholders of Nova Scotia dated May 4, 1847, Howe emphasized the magnitude of the decision which they were to make in the general election of August 5. ~

The distinction is marked – the change presents the evidence of a revolution, as great as ever appeared in the history of any country: a revolution, won for you, without a blow or a drop of blood, by peaceful and constitutional means, and which conferred upon you privileges, analogous to those which our brethren in Britain have exercised, with so much advantage for the past 160 years.

You possess, at this moment, the power to surround his

Excellency the Lieutenant Governor with Councillors in whom you repose confidence, and to reward the men whom you believe have faithfully served you, by confiding to them the emoluments of office, and the administration of public affairs. Two parties appeal to you for your suffrage – the Liberals, *who won for you this high privilege*, and the Tories who withheld it from you as long as they could, and who would, if they had the power, withdraw it from you now. Decide between them. . . . That you will decide justly, wisely, and deliver your verdict with emphasis and decision, I confidently believe. . . .

For my own part, I do not hesitate to say, that, having toiled for nineteen years, to improve your institutions, having devoted the flower of my life to sedentary labour, and active exertion, having written reams, and spoken volumes, that the humblest order of my countrymen, in the most remote sections of the Province, should comprehend the nature of this great controversy, and learn to estimate the value of the new Constitution; if you falter now – if, with the enemy before you, with the fruits of victory within your grasp, the highest privileges of British subjects, to be secured or cast away, by a single act, in a single day, [if] you show yourselves indifferent or undisciplined, I shall cease to labour, because I shall cease to hope. My private pursuits, my books, my family, will sufficiently employ, and diversify, what remains of life; but I will not waste it in unavailing opposition in the face of a solemn decision of the people, that the principles and services of my friends are valueless, and that all our labour has been in vain.

(*Novascotian*, May 17, 1847; or Annand, II, 377-78)

~ While the electors gave the Liberals a majority of only seven, their victory was certain, for none of their members fell in the category of loose fish. Months earlier the despatches of Lord Grey had directed the governors to govern henceforth with the aid of those who possessed the confidence of the assemblies. Hence, when the Nova Scotian Assembly voted non-confidence in the government of J. W. Johnston late in January, 1848, he had no alternative but to resign. A few days later the first responsible ministry in the colonies was sworn in at Halifax, with J. B. Uniacke as Attorney-General and leader of the government, and Joseph Howe as Provincial Secretary. ~

PART THREE

THE LIMITED DOMESTIC SPHERE

(1848-63)

1. REMODELLING THE GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

~ Uniacke's ministry set about immediately to adapt the provincial institutions to meet the requirements of responsible government. Howe assured Buller that the Reformers would press for no changes which were not needed to implement their principles. ~

Of one thing you may be assured, we shall "keep within the ropes" and conduct our operations in humble deference to the best examples shown us in the Mother Country. Earl Grey's Despatches, clear as a sunbeam, breathe a spirit of generous confidence in our discretion and right feeling. He shall not be disappointed. It will be our pride to make Nova Scotia a "Normal School" for the rest of the Colonies, showing them how representative Institutions may be worked, so as to insure internal tranquility, and advancement, in subordination to the paramount interest of and authority of the Empire.

(Howe to Buller, February 12, 1848, *Howe Papers*, XXXV)

~ The task of adapting the institutions was still under way when Charles Buller died. Howe paid tribute to his confidant and counsellor. ~

Contrasted with some others who take an interest in colonial questions, there was something safe, practical, and conciliatory, in Buller's advocacy of North American interests. Unlike Hume, he never frightened or misled by counselling extreme measures; and instead of traversing boundless fields, and generalizing like Molesworth, he stuck to the matter in hand, and raised no difficulties, the facile removal of which was not proved to be as

compatible with the dignity of the Parent State, as with the security of the distant Provinces of the Empire.

It was for this quality of mind that we chiefly admired Buller. He never did violence to the antique prejudices of Parliament, or feared to give honest counsel, when they seemed to require it, to the Colonists themselves. There may be rising men in both Houses, of whom we know little – but of those we do know, there is not one, in the peculiar walks he chose, who can fill Charles Buller's place.

(*Novascotian*, December 25, 1848)

~ Above all, the Reformers had to introduce machinery which would enable the Executive Council to maintain control over all the departments of government. On this subject I have written elsewhere. (*The Government of Nova Scotia*, p. 90):

Of particular concern was the precise number of public officers who were to sit in the Executive Council to effect the optimum degree of control. The Tories were still obsessed with the notion that departmental heads who are "converted into parliamentary officers . . . become possessors of an influence at the Council Board and in the Legislature, unfavourable to a faithful and vigilent [sic] *scrutiny into their official conduct," while the Reformers ridiculed the idea that officers whose conduct was constantly under the scrutiny of their opponents in the Legislature and whose resignation followed automatically an unfavourable vote in the Assembly could evade accountability for their maladministration. The former naturally favoured a strict limitation of the number of ministers with office, on the ground that the displacement of a single minister would vindicate the principles of responsible government as efficaciously as the removal of a dozen; the latter upheld their right to control seven offices, "the smallest number . . . by the aid of which, it could ever have been sup*[*p*]*osed, that Responsible Government could be carried on."*

At the outset the Reformers held only the attorney-generalship and the solicitor-generalship; Howe could not even assume the provincial secretaryship until the Assembly vacated the office by resolution. For the Reformers to be fully successful, the Colonial Secretary had to accept the Departmental Bill which they regarded as the very keystone of the new system. It replaced the Provincial Treasurer by a Receiver-General who

was to receive and pay out provincial moneys under the direction of a Financial Secretary who was to exercise the ministerial duties in connection with finance.

In accordance with the usual practice the Legislature passed the bill with a suspending clause; hence the Colonial Secretary had to give his assent to bring it into operation. Because of the flood of protests sent to England from Halifax, including one from the incumbent Provincial Treasurer, S. P. Fairbanks, the Executive Council defended its position in a minute which was largely the work of Howe. ~

2. The inherent vice of the old Colonial Governments was the absence of adequate control, by the majority of the Constituency over the Departments by which the whole Executive Machinery was moved. . . .

3. For ten years the people of Nova Scotia, variously tried, and often disappointed, have laboured to place the Executive Departments of their country in the hands of those who, from time to time, possessed in their judgment, the requisite qualifications to successfully conduct the Administration of Public Affairs. . . .

7. When Mr. Uniacke was called upon by your Excellency to aid in forming an Administration which would be supported by a majority in the Legislature, he expressly stipulated for the vacation of the two Crown Offices, the Secretaryship, the Treasury, Revenue, and Land Departments, and the office of Queen's Printer, in all but seven, but all alike essential to the framework of that new system of Executive responsibility which we have been authorized to introduce. Yielding to your Excellency's desire an Administration was finally arranged, including but three of these Offices, it being perfectly understood that the others were to be assumed by persons enjoying the confidence of a majority of the Assembly so soon as measures necessary to secure consolidation, and accountability could be carried through the two Houses. . . .

9. We may over-estimate the moderation displayed by a party having established a complete political ascendancy, after a contest of ten years, but if Earl Grey was aware of the sacrifices we have made to guard from inconvenience and loss, all those whose removal was not indispensable to the security of the Administration and the efficiency of the Public Service, he could scarcely desire that, after thus resisting the pressure of

our friends, for the protection of our opponents, we should be left for the remainder of the year with no effectual controul over the Land, Finance and Revenue departments, wanting which, by any party, there can be no efficient or satisfactory administration of affairs. . . .

10. His Lordship will find in the Blue Book the names of 160 officers employed in the civil service of this Province. After conducting the administration for months, but four removals have been pressed, but two or three others are required. We have asked for no office that is not or has not been made, by the peculiar circumstances which have arisen here, political. We desire nothing that we are not prepared to surrender to our opponents, whenever we cease to enjoy the confidence of your Excellency and the support of Parliament.

11. The best proofs that we have limited our claims to the smallest number of officers, by the aid of which it could ever have been supposed that Responsible Government could be carried on, are to be found in the facts, that, at this moment, the Secretary is the only Officer friendly to the Administration in the Province Building, within which the Chief business of the country is daily transacted. . . .

12. This state of things cannot continue. We do not believe that Earl Grey . . . will for a moment desire that it should. . . .

13. If the country is thrown again into confusion or left with an Administration powerless for good, the fault will not be ours.

(*Minute of Council*, July 21, 1848; or Annand, I, 569-73)

~ Although Lord Grey felt that the Departmental Bill went further than was necessary to vindicate the principle of responsibility, he conceded that the Nova Scotian Legislature must be the final judge. Over the next half-dozen years J. W. Johnston was obsessed with the idea that responsible government had ushered in unchecked executive tyranny acting under baneful party influence. More than once, Howe attempted to show that the checks upon the executive were ample; he admitted, nonetheless, that Johnston's opposition was valuable during an evolutionary period. ~

[Johnston] tells you we have no checks upon the unlimited exercise of power by this House. We have one, Sir, in the body that meets in the other end of this building. And we have another, which, were I placed in a position, to which I have

never aspired, that of Lieutenant-Governor, I should not hesitate to use, and whenever I thought the power of this House was stretched to an illegal extent appeal to the judgment of the people to decide between us. Are not the two Houses of Imperial Parliament and the Crown, together with the troops in our Garrison, and the Navy which guards our shores, powerful checks upon any undue exercise of this privilege?

(Speech of January 23, 1849, *Novascotian*, January 29, 1849)

Of legitimate restraints we have enough. . . . Let [Johnston] show me the nine men in Nova Scotia, who with all the adjuncts and auxiliaries to sustain them in power which it is possible to imagine, would dare to do acts of gross injustice. I would not require even what Sheridan asked for, the freedom of the Press, to expel them from power.

(Speech of February 1, 1849, *Novascotian*, February 12, 1849)

Johnston has one prominent fault as a statesman – he is very apt to be startled at a shadow. He reminds me of the boy in the fable – the urchin who bawled out so often and so lustily "wolf, wolf," to the disappointment and annoyance of the good natured parties who ran to his assistance, that, when the wolf did really come, he cried out in vain, and there was no one to help him. Why, Sir, I can remember well the first time I went to a Theatre; my young imagination was dreadfully startled at the thunder and lightning; but, by and by, I found my way behind the scenes, and there were the iron plates to rattle forth the thunder, and the dredging box filled with sulphur to dart forth the lightning, and all fear vanished. The honble. gentlemen from Annapolis indulges too often in imaginary fears; but still I cannot think, withal, that he is just the man which Nova Scotia required whilst the agitation of the past four years was disturbing the public mind. Too cautious, perhaps for he will never come to any understanding whatever; but, nevertheless, the man for the moment.

(*The Sun*, March 22, 1848)

~ Unconvinced by Howe's arguments, Johnston contended that the only remedy for the ills of executive tyranny was "a well-regulated system of democratic institutions." He therefore advocated elective municipal institutions to assume the local government functions of the Courts of Sessions, whose members were nominated by the Executive Council. To this proposal Howe did not object, but he strongly resisted the attempt to set

up an elective Legislature Council which Johnston proposed largely as a means of depriving the Executive Council of its right to nominate the members of the existing upper House. ~

The constitution we have, Sir, is in example far superior to anything we can draw from the United States, prosperous as they are, numerous as is their population, glorious as may be their destinies. I cannot, Sir, as a descendant of the old stock, forget that we are humbly endeavouring to imitate a constitution which has grown up ripening and strengthening for a thousand years, and possessing an aspect of solidity and permanence which the free institutions of our neighbours, admirable as they are, cannot rival. The Hon. and learned member for Annapolis wishes to give us a new constitution; nothing will do him, but the republicanism of our neighbours. He casts behind him the noble institutions of our parent land, and I couldn't help smiling the other evening, as he came to these strange conclusions: away with the trappings of royalty, away with the prerogatives of the crown, away with the second branch of the Legislature. Sir, I go for a system of administration, which has some experience to recommend it – a mode of conducting public business, which has been worked well for ages among the Anglo-Saxon people. Does he seek for that? No, but a departure from our old landmarks, and the election of the second branch of the Legislature. Let me ask, Sir, how long this innovation will satisfy the people if we once begin? We shall soon have our Governors and Judges elected; in short the principle must be carried out through all the ramifications of society. Should we then have the British Constitution? Should we have either the will or the power to defend the independent exercise of the prerogative in particulars where we will admit it should be full and unrestrained? We should have, Sir, to change our entire administration, and perhaps soon sacrifice our connexion with the parent state, and part from, and bury forever, those glorious associations which are ours so long as the tie is unsevered.

(Speech of February 23, 1852, *Morning Chronicle*, March 4 and 6, 1852; or Annand, II, 140-41)

2. THE BUILDING OF RAILROADS AS PUBLIC WORKS

~ Even while the governmental institutions were being remodelled, Howe had renewed his interest in railway projects. Earlier

(1835) he had published some papers in pamphlet form advocating a railway from Halifax to Windsor. On March 25, 1850, he moved a resolution pledging the revenues of the Province for the same project. ~

We may be told that the railroads are not matters in which government should interfere. I differ entirely with those who entertain such an opinion, and I do not hesitate to propound it as one of the guiding principles of policy which shall run through the whole course of my after life, that I shall, while in any government, press them to take the initiative in such works as this. It is the first duty of a government to take the front rank in every noble enterprise; to be in advance of the social, political, and industrial energies, which they have undertaken to lead. There are things they should not touch or attempt to controul; but the great highways – the channels of intercommunication between large and wealthy sections of the country – should claim their especial consideration; and when I am told that we should hand over, for all time to come, this great Western Railway to a private Company, I have to such an assignment a serious objection; . . . this Railroad, which will be the Queen's highway to the Western Counties in all time to come, should be the property of the Province and not of a private association. . . .

Sir, I hope to see the time in this province when the question asked every public man at the Hustings, will be – not "to what party do you belong?" but – "what great public improvement do you mean to advocate? to what great public measure tending to advance the general welfare of the people, are you pledged?" The people will hereafter require public measures of public men; and, next to the care of their liberties and political interests, they will look for the development of their resources and the advancement of their condition. Men acting upon the public stage should move forward in advance of the times, and not trust too much to the position which they have acquired by past services.

(*The Sun*, April 29 and May 1, 1850; or Annand, II, 14-20)

~ The Legislature provided only half the money which Howe requested and left the other half to be raised by public subscription. Meanwhile two other projects were receiving attention. In July the Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, refused assistance for the railway from Halifax to Quebec which had long been mooted. About the same time Nova Scotian delegates were

attending a Convention at Portland, Maine, which considered favourably an European and North American Railway from Halifax through Saint John to Portland. At a meeting in Halifax on August 24 to deal with the delegates' report, Howe again insisted that the government must assume the leadership in railway construction. ~

Had my resolution of last winter been allowed to pass, we should have had a spade in the ground long ere this – nay, we would have been riding on the rail car from this to Windsor before it would have been necessary to break ground upon the Portland line. . . . But what a lesson does the failure of that resolution teach. . . . The Legislature took half the stock of £165,000; my fellow citizens [of Halifax] came forward manfully, and pledged their property for £100,000, making £265,000, there remained then but £65,000, more to raise. We had a great mass meeting in [the] midst of the county of Hants; the people were stirred up by every possible means – and after three months struggle how much had we raised? not £5,000. . . .

Of one thing be assured: if any Railroad is to be made in this Province, it must be in the mode I propose. We must take the question up boldly, throw the responsibility on the Exceutive, and pledge the resources of the country.

(*The Sun*, September 2, 1850)

~ On Howe's motion the meeting passed a resolution calling upon the government to construct the Nova Scotian portion of these lines. In September, 1850, Earl Grey indicated that the British government would provide no assistance for the Portland line; in October the Nova Scotian government sent Howe to Britain to determine the conditions under which the province might borrow money for railways, either with or without the guarantee of the British government. Extracts from his diary during this mission indicate that, despite his alleged egotism, humility characterized his quieter, contemplative moments. Most interesting of all, they demonstrate how one of his flashes transformed a mission entirely pecuniary in character into a plan for the elevation of the Empire, mother country, and colonies alike. ~

At Sea. Nov. 5

I am here by no mean contrivance and for no selfish end, but at the general call of my country, to do her business and repre-

sent her in all honour and good faith. The things I have already done, were accomplished in obedience to impulses which I could not control. Knowledge which I never acquired by study, flashed into my mind as if by inspiration, and a firmness, all unlike my general nature, which is yielding and indifferent enough in small matters, has been vouchsafed to me in my hardest trials. Something of all this I hope and pray for now. The future is before me without a ray to indicate what it may be – but my trust in Him, whose work in these matters I believe I am called upon to do.

(*Howe Letters*, pp. 106-7)

Sunday Dec. 1. Thought well over the state of affairs and determined to write a second Letter to Earl Grey marking the broad outlines of a vigorous Colonial Policy including Representation in Parliament by two members of [the] Executive Council from any Council where Responsible Government is established. The idea original (one of my flashes) never heard it suggested at home or here. Never thought of it myself before. Sweeps half the difficulties out of the way. . . . On this hint I wrote, and worked all day and half the night. . . .

Dec. 3. Corrected and copied Letter, and thought of but little else. A great Card – skilfully played and must strengthen my game. If it does not offend from its presumption (and there is the risk) it must improve my position, by showing that the Railroad is only a part of a general scheme of policy in which His Lordship personally and the British Government have as deep an interest as ourselves. . . .

Dec. 13th. Letter from Grey at last, thank Providence, and all right. "I have received your letter of the 4th, and I have read it with the attention which its great importance deserves . . . ." that's pretty well from a Minister of State to a poor Bluenose far away from his friends, in a big City – the said Minister bound by his high position, to know every thing, and the Bluenose, supposed to know little or nothing. That "flash" was "light from Heaven." . . . So far so well. No false step yet. . . . Generally favourable, but sees objections. Must remove them tomorrow. . . .

Dec. 28th, Sat. The black Saturday. Official letter from Hawes, sawing me off with a flat refusal. . . . Very sick and wretched besides. . . . One [friend] that I counted on, I have not, health. My voice has been gone for a month and my lungs are dreadfully oppressed. Not in good trim to fight an Imperial Govern-

ment and agitate England. It will come to that at last. . . .

Monday Dec. 30th. Deputation from Southampton. . . . Fellows deeply interested. "Will I go down?" Would I, aye, and make Grey and Hawes hear "a voice from Southampton" before long. . . .

Mon. Jan. 6. [Interview with Grey] Grey and Hawes both looking very grim and self complacent. Two to one and long odds. But here goes at you – "ye cogging Greeks, have at ye both." The interview lasted two hours. What passed may be guessed by the result. When I entered the room my all trembled in the balance. When I came out, Hawes had his letter of 28th Decr. in his pocket, it being suppressed and struck off the files. I had permission to go on in my own way and finish my case before any decision was given. I had besides, general assurance of sympathy and aid, and permission to feel the pulse of the public in any way I pleased. Viva! "boldness in civil business" says old Bacon, but as I go down Downing Street my heart is too full of thankfulness to leave room for one throb of triumph. . . .

Sat. 11th. That I should stand, at some time or other, face to face with the people of England, has been for years my firm conviction. But, how, or when, or on what occasion, I could never conjecture. The Portland Convention did not originate with me. That I did not go to it arose from the jealousy of my enemies. The Resolution to assure the work was forced upon me by the folly and bad faith of the same parties. The Mission here was forced upon me by Grey's Despatch, and now just as the narrower views and hesitation of the Colonial office, compel me to study and propound great principles of National Policy, a fine field opens before me for their graceful and successful promulgation.

But shall I be equal to the task? Aye, there's the rub. I wish my health was better, and my voice was clearer. But he who has helped me many a time wont desert me now.

(*Howe Papers*, LXVI, 27-139)

~ In his speech at Southampton on January 14, 1851, Howe proposed an elevated scheme of colonial policy, which included the promotion of vital public works through Imperial credit, the preparation of Crown lands for settlement, and the encouragement of the migration of the poor from Britain by the provision of cheap transportation. This address attracted wide attention throughout Britain. ~

The object of my visit to England is to draw closer the ties between the North American Provinces and the mother country. To reproduce England on the other side of the Atlantic; to make the children, in institutions, feelings, and civilization, as much like the parent as possible, has been the labour of my past life; and now I wish to encourage the parent to promote her own interests by caring for the welfare, and strengthening the hands, of her children; to show to the people of England that across the Atlantic they possess Provinces of inestimable value. . . .

For your sakes, as well as for their own . . . the people of British America are anxious to see you adopt an elevated and enlarged scheme of Colonial policy, by which relief will be given to your resources, and strength to their own. The hopes and prospects of the future will then atone for the omissions and errors of the past. We shall feel that England is indeed our home, and you will feel that you have homes on both sides of the Atlantic. . . .

I believe that the present cabinet is sincerely desirous . . . to relieve the burdens of this country and strengthen the North American Provinces. But I need scarcely tell you, that no administration in these islands can do anything but what the people approve. The responsibility, in this, as in all other important measures, rests with the people. Let them assume the desire of Government and act upon it. Let them stimulate the Executive, if that is required. . . .

In the British people I have an abiding faith. I should regret it if it were otherwise, for I have an hereditary interest in these questions. During the old times of persecution, four brothers, bearing my name, left the southern counties of England, and settled in four of the old New England states. Their descendants number thousands and are scattered from Maine to California. My father was the only descendant of that stock who, at the Revolution, adhered to the side of England. His bones rest in the Halifax churchyard. I am his only surviving son; and, whatever the future may have in store, I want, when I stand beside his grave, to feel that I have done my best to preserve the connection he valued, that the British flag may wave above the soil in which he sleeps.

(Annand, II, 33-51)

~ After further ups and downs Howe eventually received a letter from Under-Secretary Hawes which appeared to guaran-

tee loans for both the Quebec and Portland lines. Howe's diary records his elation. ~

Tues. Mar. 11. Despatch at last. Read it in bed. Laid my head down and thanked God who had crowned all my labours with such success. My solitary thoughts – hopes, fears, toils and trials he only knows or can know. The steadiness of my conviction that I was doing his work, and should have his aid never faltered. This closes the past up nobly. The future is full of labour and perplexity, but I shall have His counsel and guidance through it all. . . .

Thurs. Apr. 10. [On board ship] Bed. Luxury to get into berth – shut out the world and think my own thoughts again. Five months seems like a dream. Thank God with all my heart and soul for all his mercies. How should I have felt returning mortified and unsuccessful, enemies growing, and damned good natural friends sneering. The very thought of the risk I ran . . . makes me quiver. Successful beyond my own, beyond anybody's hopes. But will any body be satisfied? Will there be union, energy, wisdom, enterprize to realize this vision? We shall see.

(*Howe Papers*, LXVI, 27-139)

~ On Howe's return he set about educating public opinion to the soundness of the combined project. Oratorically he was at his best at Mason's Hall in Halifax on May 15. ~

[Howe first pointed out that Halifax was the natural terminus for an intercolonial railway ending in Montreal.] But when Montreal is reached, shall we stop there? . . . Sir, to bind these disjointed Provinces together by Iron Roads, to give them the homogeneous character, fixedness of purpose, and elevation of sentiment, which they so much require, is our first duty. But, after all, they occupy but a limited proportion of that boundless heritage which God and Nature have given to us and to our children. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are but the frontage of a territory which includes 4,000,000 of square miles; stretching away behind and beyond them, to the Frozen Regions on the one side and to the Pacific on the other. . . . Will you then, put your hands unitedly – with order, intelligence and energy, to this great work? Refuse and you are recreants to every principle which lies at the base of your country's prosperity and advancement; refuse, and the Deity's hand-writing upon land and sea, is to you unintelligible language; refuse, and Nova Scotia, instead

of occupying the foreground as she does, should have been thrown back, at least behind the rocky mountains. God has planted your Country in the front of this boundless region. See that you comprehend its destiny and resources, see that you discharge, with energy and elevation of soul, the duties which devolve upon you in virtue of your position. . . . I am neither a Prophet, nor a son of a Prophet, yet I will venture to predict that in five years we shall make the journey hence to Quebec and Montreal, and home through Portland and St. John, by Rail; and I believe that many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the Steam Engine in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific in five or six days. . . .

It is frequently said, sir, that a government should not touch these public works. . . . But, sir, what is a Government for if it is not to take the lead in noble enterprises – to stimulate industry – to elevate and guide the public mind? You may set eight or nine men on red cushions or gilded chairs, with nothing to do but pocket their salaries, and call that a Government. To such a pageant I have no desire to belong. Those who aspire to govern others should neither be afraid of the saddle by day nor of the lamp by night. In advance of the general intelligence they should lead the way to improvement and prosperity. I would rather assume the staff of Moses, and struggle with the perils of the Wilderness, and the waywardness of the multitude; than be a golden calf, stuck up in gorgeous inactivity, the object of a worship which debased. . . .

There are higher interests involved [in this work] even than our own. I believe this to be God's work, and I believe that He will prosper it. I believe that a wise and beneficent Providence never intended that millions of square miles of fertile territory behind and around us, should be waste and unoccupied, while millions of our fellow creatures rot in Alms Houses and Poor Houses over the sea, or perish for lack of food. I regard these railroads, after all, but as means for the accomplishment of elevated and beneficent ends. . . . Aid me in this good work, and the capital of England will flow into North America, providing healthy employment for her surplus population; aid me in this good work, and the poor rates of Britain may be beaten down from £8,000,000 to £3,000,000; aid me in this good work, and the streets may be cleared, and the Alms Houses closed up; aid me in this good work, and, while the home markets are

extended, North America will rise to the rank of a second or third rate power, with all the organization and attributes of a nation.

(*Sun* Extra, May 26, 1851; or Annand, II, 59-74)

~ In the whirlwind tour of New Brunswick and Canada which followed Howe spoke to highly enthusiastic audiences on his railway proposals. In Quebec City, as earlier at Saint John, he contended that an intercolonial railway was an essential prerequisite to colonial union. ~

I come not . . . to propound any political scheme, nor have I formed in my own mind any theory for a more extended organization of these Provinces; but this I may say to those who have, that we must make the railroads first before any combination is possible. To the advocates of legislative union I say, your scheme is impracticable without the railroads. To the Federalist my advice is, make the railroads first, and test your theory afterwards. To the people of the maritime Provinces [I say], make the railroads, that you may behold the fertile and magnificent territory that lies behind you. To the Canadians [I say], make the railroads, that you may come down upon the seaboard and witness its activity, and appreciate the exhaustless treasures it contains. . . .

Before I close, let me allude to one topic which is often referred to as unfavourable to our future progress. The distinction of race is the invidious theme upon which alarmists love to dwell. . . . Less than a century ago, Sir Wm. Howe led up the Light Infantry to fight the French upon the plains of Abraham, and the blood of brave men on both sides sank into the soil. But what of that? Their descendants form one family; and his namesake comes to invade Canada in another mode – to plant a railroad, not a scaling-ladder; and hopes to rouse the lethargic with the whistle of a steam engine, not with the blast of war. So let it ever be. Let us respect each other's peculiarities. The French should imitate the intelligent enterprise of their neighbours. The English should remember that no Frenchman ever lacked courage, no French lady, grace. Let us copy from each other till that time arrives when,

As the varying tints unite,
They'll form in heaven's light
One arch of Peace.

(Annand, II, 95-97)

~ When Howe returned from Canada, he was immediately plunged into a general election. Since Halifax would certainly elect members who would support his railway projects, he decided to contest Cumberland: "The Citadel being safe, I must take my stand somewhere upon the outworks of the position, that those who are open or concealed enemies, may not gain, at this important crisis, any advantage." In his letter to the electors of Nova Scotia, he again asked for their assistance in elevating the North American colonies. ~

One would suppose that, in presence of such mighty and sublime objects, the voice of faction would be hushed, and that the Obstructives would, for once, get out of the way, and crawl into their holes. Not so, now the cry is – "Oh! Howe is going to ruin the country, by making Railroads. He is going to lay on heavy permanent taxes to pay interest and sinking funds, and making Railroads in New Brunswick." This is the last wretched shift of a beaten and disappointed faction, who, having neither the brains nor the industry to do any good for Nova Scotia themselves, are envious of every body who tries to do any good. . . .

Think of the past, look hopefully at the future. Providence has blessed our labours heretofore, and will again. I have never deceived, never deserted you. You will stand by me now in this last effort to improve our country, elevate these noble Provinces, and form them into a Nation. A noble heart is beating beneath the giant ribs of North America now. See that you do not, by apathy or indifference, depress its healthy pulsations.

(*Morning Chronicle*, August 19, 1851)

~ The North American railway projects having come to the attention of the English contractors, Messrs. Jackson, Peto, Betts, and Brassey, they sent out C. D. Archibald with a roving commission to act in their interests. Archibald intimated that, if his clients were given the contract for building all the lines without competition, they would become "co-partners" with the province in providing first-class works at substantial savings. J. W. Johnston looked favourably upon this mode of proceeding, but Howe adamantly opposed private ownership or control of the railroads in any form. ~

For six years . . . the field was open to all the adventurous. . . . The Government of England civilly declined the risk – the

capitalists of England (and Mr. Archibald was in the midst of them all the time) never offered to assist us. . . .

Had Mr. Archibald . . . or any body else, come to me when I entered London, with a company prepared to build our Railroad at their own risk, or even upon the terms already granted by the Colonial Legislatures, my task would have been simple, and my labour light. On the contrary, I found lots of embryo companies, and individuals, zealous to spend money raised upon our credit, and to speculate in Colonial lands. I found none who were willing to run the slightest risk, or to advance funds not guaranteed by the Colonial or Imperial Governments. I laboured to work out my own policy in the full conviction that none were to be found . . . [now] having got the money cheap, [the problem is] *to make it go as far as possible*. Assuredly it is not to embarrass ourselves with Companies and Associations, who shrunk from us "in our extremity," but who appear very anxious to aid us now that we can do without them. . . . If they come, *as contractors*, I see no reason why they should not expend, for their own and our advantage, the whole seven millions. If they come, *as co-partners*, we shall be at their mercy, and involved in complications and embarrassments which I desire to avoid.

(Letter to the Constituency of Cumberland, *Morning Chronicle*, September 9, 1851)

~ While the Liberals won the election by a narrow majority, they were by no means united on the railway question. Nevertheless, Howe expressed confidence that the proposals which he presented to the Assembly on November 8, 1851 would unite, not divide the province. ~

I have no fears for the way in which this measure will be dealt with by the people of this Province. . . . I have never known this Legislature deficient in harmony and unanimity where a great occasion demanded it. It is my pride to contemplate those green spots which dot the history of this deliberat[iv]e Assembly – neutral ground where we all meet as Nova Scotians uniting for their country's welfare. . . . I firmly entertain the belief that, by the time this question is discussed and tried out, we shall unite on it. . . . I fervently believe it will be like the smiling rivers, with which a bountiful Providence has blessed our land, the common highway of all, the undivided property of every Nova Scotian man, woman and child; and that each *one* within these

walls will have his share of the pride and gratification of aiding its construction.

(*Morning Chronicle*, November 11 and 13, 1851; or Annand, II, 127)

~ Accompanying the railway bills was a land bill which was designed to encourage emigration from Britain. When Dr. Brown of Horton asked what would sustain a large population in barren Nova Scotia, he received a quick retort from Howe. ~

What is there to keep them here, sir? Why health; peace and personal security; a fruitful soil and abundant fisheries; sparkling rivers and rich mines; an increasing commerce, aye! and the blessed sight of the sea. . . .

Expansive and magnificent as are the western lakes – their waters don't look blue. Lie down to sleep beside them, and let fever and ague teach you the difference. I would rather live in sight of the sea on two meals a day, than in rich abundance where its endless variety was wanting, or the sound of the surges a tradition. But have we no fertility to keep us at home? Let him traverse the whole area of the country which those Lakes encircle and find me a spot which has borne its grass and grain for an hundred years without manure – or a hole, like Mudcreek, beside his dwelling, where a farmer may obtain manure in exhaustless abundance. I ask my hon. friend to traverse that frontier of the American Union lying between Providence and Portland and show me a spot which can compare with the country extending from the foot of the Ardoise hills to Digby Gut, with the marshes and uplands of Cumberland, the green hills and Intervales of Pictou or of Sydney, or even with that portion of Cape Breton circling the Bras d'or Lake. Sir, he cannot; then for heavens sake don't let us undervalue the country we have got – it will prove more profitable for us to bend our energies to the development of its resources than to be continually engaged in unnatural depreciation.

(Speech of November 15, 1851, *Novascotian*, December 22, 1851)

~ Although Howe's bills called upon Nova Scotia to defray one-third the cost of the lines – a sum considerably in excess of that required to build the Nova Scotian section – they were passed by the Legislature without incident. Exultantly he declared: "My countrymen have redeemed every pledge I ever gave for them at Home and abroad."

And then, within days, the blow fell – a letter from Grey

dated November 27, 1851, stating that his guarantee applied only to the Quebec line and not the Portland branch. Howe at first blamed himself for the misunderstanding, but he later concluded that sinister influences had operated on the British government. ~

But why did I fail? Is there a man here who blames me? Is there a man who does not feel that I failed, because the interests of powerful parties in England, who wanted to make money out of those roads, were opposed to the interests of the Provinces?...

The interests of a few members of Parliament, and rich Contractors in England, were on one side, and the interest of the Colonists on the other, and in such a case there was no great difficulty in giving two meanings to a despatch, or in telling a Nova Scotian with no seat in Parliament, or connections or influence in England, that he had made a mistake.... And what care I for the taunts and slanders of those recreant Nova Scotians, who combining with these speculators, against their country, hope to put some portion of the 11½ per cent into their own pockets?

(Speech at Amherst, June 29, 1853, *The Sun*, July 14, 1853; or Annand, II, 171-72)

~ Howe's grand design for the elevation of the North American colonies had collapsed. Since the Portland branch had now to be abandoned, New Brunswick insisted that the intercolonial line run through the settled valley of the St. John River rather than the relatively uninhabited eastern section of the province. This meant that Howe's colonization scheme would have to be given up; it also meant that Halifax would become a backwater of Saint John rather than the eastern terminus of a complex of continental lines. With a heavy heart he agreed to the changes, but only on condition that Nova Scotia assume one-quarter rather than one-third of the cost. ~

Our question now is not what we would like to do, but what we *can* do.... If [the new] proposition carries, it must be by arguments totally different from those used in November. You sweep away all that was then said about opening the commerce of the Gulf ports to Nova Scotia – the advantages of emigration, and the sale of the wild lands in the centre of New Brunswick. The line by the valley of St. John will be comparatively valueless to us. If that is chosen, St. Andrews and St. John will inevitably become the great Atlantic shipping ports for the

produce of the west. But I would rather that friendly cities should enjoy these advantages than cities in a foreign state. If St. John grows larger than Halifax, we can thank God it is a British City and be proud of its prosperity. But if this motion fails, not many days will elapse before I will ask this House to pass a Bill for commencing a Railroad at Halifax Harbour to go North – I frankly say I do not like this scheme. As a North American plan I do not think it would be followed by the realization of our hopes. . . . But . . . as I am for a Railway at any rate, I do not feel in a position to reject it, not being prepared to substitute any other proposal.

(Speech of February 2, 1852, *Morning Chronicle*, February 5, 1852)

~ On February 5, 1852, Howe replied to Johnston's charge that New Brunswick would gain more than Nova Scotia by the change in railway plans. ~

Well, Sir, in God's name what is New Brunswick? A Foreign nation, under a foreign Crown with hostile interests and feelings to our own? No, but a Province under the same sceptre, descended from the same stock and holding the same friendly relationship towards us as Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, or Cape Breton, before her annexation held. My vision is not confined under the limited circle of our present position; I look forward to the arrival of that period, which must sooner or later come, when all these British North American Provinces shall be confederated, when there shall be no necessity for these delegations we being one family and one people; nay, Sir, I confidently anticipate the dawning of an era when we shall become one great nation.

(*Morning Chronicle*, February 7, 1852)

~ Howe did not join the delegates from Canada and New Brunswick who sought guarantees for the new proposals in England. When they failed, Francis Hincks of Canada rebuked him severely. Publicly Howe justified his absence on two grounds, his need to run in a by-election in Cumberland where his seat had been vacated, and the death of the Lieutenant-Governor; privately he confessed that he would have been a poor advocate of proposals which he supported only lukewarmly. ~

We consented to the Line by the St. John most reluctantly, after the utter derangement of my whole scheme, by the with-

drawal of aid to the Branch line. That destroyed the moral influence exercised over North America for six months and left Nova Scotia powerless. . . .

But our hearts were not in the matter, and I preferred to stay at home rather than go to England at the risk of thwarting the other Colonies if I told all I felt and doing violence to my nature if I did not. Sir John Harvey's death furnished me with a very good excuse for staying here. The results of the Delegation have not surprised me, and now that they have been worked out without any unfair interference of Nova Scotia she may be at liberty to move when the proper time comes.

(Howe to Lord Derby, private, June 24, 1852, *Howe Papers*, XXXVI, 685-87)

~ Howe was now determined that Nova Scotia should build its own railroads as public works. On a trip to Britain late in 1852 he tried to persuade the Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, to revive the railway and colonization project which had collapsed. ~

Into the causes which deranged . . . [the railway and colonization] policy, I do not wish to enter, at present, my personal grievances. . . . In renewing . . . the Railway question at all, I prefer to do it in this private and unofficial mode, that if any thing be done, it may appear to spring from the spontaneous feeling of the Government. . . .

I am quite aware of the objections which may be urged in Parliament by such men as Cobden and others against the measure, but, I humbly conceive that those who are regarded in the Provinces as the Advocates of dismemberment ought not to be deferred to by those who seek to maintain the integrity of the Empire. If they were confronted resolutely, and beaten, upon a great Colonial question, the moral effect would be excellent. . . .

[If the British government decides adversely], we shall complete our contracts and set resolutely to work with our own resources. We shall owe in the end, a good deal of money, but not much gratitude. When our system of Railways is complete we shall probably feel towards the Mother Country as [Samuel] Johnson felt towards the Patron who left him to struggle through a work of great magnitude and value, the weight of which a little judicious aid would so materially have lightened.

(Howe to the Earl of Derby, November 27, 1852, *Howe Papers*, VII, 61-72)

~ Howe got nowhere with the British government, but he reached an agreement with Baring Brothers for the negotiation of one million pounds of the province's bonds on favourable terms. So at the next session of the Legislature he was able to introduce bills authorizing the government to construct the main thoroughfares by tender and contract. To Johnston's charges that he was inoculating the public mind with extravagant and unrestrained ideas, he replied on February 2, 1853. ~

Yes, sir, I have endeavoured to give my countrymen enlarged views and conceptions on these subjects; I am proud that to the best of my ability I have striven to elevate their eyes and minds from the little pedling muddy pool of politics beneath their feet to something more enobling, exalting and inspiring, calculated to enlarge the borders of their intelligence, and increase the extent and area of their prosperity. I have dealt with great questions since my advent to political life; can the hon. and learned leader of the opposition point to the measure I have passed which has not proved a blessing and a benefit to the country? Can he show me [one] act in which I have ever deluded, misled, entrapped or ensnared my Countrymen? Sir, he cannot; I have taught them to discard their little jealousies and intrigues . . . and I am now endeavouring to impress upon them that they have the natural resources, the material and mental wealth to elevate their little country and make it conspicuous before the world. Sir, in that hope I am willing to toil. I believe that Nova Scotia has in all these matters discharged her duty; and if, sir, we do sometimes expand our wings a little too broadly and soar somewhat too near the sun, we are at least refreshed by the contrast it affords to those mud puddles which render public life so nauseous.

(*Morning Chronicle*, February 5, 1853)

~ Unfortunately for Howe, his own party was not united on railway matters. So when Mr. Jackson of Jackson, Peto, Betts, and Brassey persuaded Canada and New Brunswick to let his organization construct their railroads as private undertakings, Howe reluctantly agreed to give them the opportunity to fulfill their "magnificent promises" in Nova Scotia. But if they failed to commence the works within six months, his own proposals were to become operative. He defended his position at Amherst on June 29, 1853. ~

When [the present] session opened, the money was ready on the credit of the Province alone, to build all our Railroads. Contractors were ready to build them for 20 per cent less than New Brunswick and Canada were to pay. In ten days the Bills might have been passed; in ten more the Contracts would have been signed, and 500 men might now have been upon the lines. Again the interests of rich Contractors and scheming Attorneys, clashed with the interests of the Province, and united the Opposition to a man. I could have beaten them notwithstanding, had not one or two persons, calling themselves Liberals, conspired with the enemy to destroy our Bills, and to dash down the hopes and prospects of their own party, at the proudest moment of its political history. This work accomplished, the combined Opposition were powerless for good. They could neither form a Government nor build a Railroad. To secure a Party triumph, they promised that Mr. Jackson would build three Roads, and pay us interest at 6 per cent for any Bonds the Province gave him. I did not believe that he could do this. I don't believe it now, but the moment that his friends put that pledge in writing, we accepted it, and a compromise was the result. That compromise we shall stand by in good faith. If Mr. Jackson, or any body else, will form a Company, and construct the Railroads under the Act of Incorporation which has been passed, the government will give them every fair co-operation. But, should no Company be formed, the alternative Bills come into operation, and the Roads will be built as originally proposed. The day is far distant, my friends, when I shall be ashamed of my Railway policy, or afraid to discuss it in any part of Nova Scotia. Against fearful odds I have battled for the general interests, and if I have not done all that I wished, I have at least done all that I could.

(*The Sun*, July 14, 1853; or Annand, II, 172-73)

~ Howe prophesied correctly; Jackson and his associates soon abandoned Nova Scotia. In the Assembly a Tory member, L. M. Wilkins of Windsor, deplored the party strife on railroads, and called upon the government to present concrete, practical proposals for their construction. Howe replied on February 1, 1854. ~

There is [now] but one question agitating the minds of this people which could detain me in public life a single day; and that is whether this Country shall be webbed by Railways or

not. My work will then be done. The principles for which, in early life, I battled are now in effective operation; the measures I then proposed have passed into Law. I have no desire that the remainder of my life should be embittered by party strife. Animated then by these feelings, prompted by this desire, in reply to the hon. and learned member's question I can only say that I do not think that the Government would discharge its duty to the country were they to allow this session to pass over without taking the only steps practicable to obtain for the Province the inestimable blessings of Railway Communication. . . .

Let Nova Scotia be but covered with railways, and [I] will be necessitated to seek some other opponent with whom to measure [my] weapon; let this consummation be once achieved, and as for the office I hold, some other more youthful, more aspiring, more ambitious, is welcome to fill it as soon as he may.

(*British Colonist*, February 4, 1854)

~ Later in the session the Legislature agreed to proceed with railway construction on the lines which Howe had proposed in 1853. Shortly afterwards he resigned as Provincial Secretary to become Chief Commissioner of the bi-partisan Railway Board which was to arrange for the construction of the railroads and operate them. Within months the construction of the Windsor branch had begun. In contrast with the experience of the other provinces no scandal ever attached to railway building in Nova Scotia under the administrative machinery devised by Howe. He remained Chief Commissioner until the defeat of the Liberal government in February, 1857. ~

3. THE CATHOLIC IMBROGLIO

~ In 1856-57 there occurred an event which Howe considered perhaps the most unfortunate of his career, his estrangement from the Catholics, whose legitimate interests he had always strongly espoused. The incidents preceding the break only become clear in the light of Howe's "recruiting" campaign to the United States in March and April, 1855. In the preceding December the British Parliament had passed an Enlistment Act permitting the recruitment of foreigners for the British armies in the Crimea. Howe needed no urging to ascertain to what extent the act might be usefully employed in the United States; whether he violated that country's neutrality laws or merely skirted them is a moot point. Later William Gladstone sharply

criticized the British ambassador in Washington, John F. Crampton, who had assisted Howe in his American activities. In a letter to Gladstone dated July 30, 1856 Howe defended his own acts. ~

Could I, as a man of honour and a loyal subject, decline this service? Our army before Sebastopol was, at that moment, thinned by incessant combats and wasted by famine and disease. Every mail brought to British America accounts of its heroism and its sufferings. . . . I should have been a craven had I declined the service for which I was selected. What have British subjects to do with the laws and policy of foreign states, in a time of war and national emergency? To obey their Queen's commands – to apprehend and give effect to the policy of their own Government, is their first and highest duty. And I do not hesitate to say that, if instructed, at that moment, to violate the laws and contravene the policy of any foreign state, in order to give the gallant fellows in the Crimea effective succour, I would have obeyed without a moment's hesitation; there is no prison so loathsome in which I would not have cheerfully spent five years, to have placed five regiments, in the spring of 1855, under the walls of Sebastopol. But I received no such instructions. I went to the United States for no such purpose. I went to test the accuracy of statements made to Her Majesty's Government by British and foreign residents in that country; to study the bearing of the neutrality laws; to make known to foreign officers and others, who had made voluntary offers of service, the terms upon which their services would be accepted, whenever, without violation of law or disturbance of amicable relations, they chose to present themselves upon British territory, and there, free to the last moment from tie or obligation, enlist in the foreign legion.

(Chisholm, II, 333)

~ Meanwhile a succession of events in Nova Scotia had thoroughly appalled the ardently pro-British Howe. For some time the *Halifax Catholic*, which had been founded by Irish priests in 1854, had not only gone beyond the tolerable limits in denouncing Protestants and Protestantism, but had been outspokenly anti-British to the extent of gloating over British reverses in the Crimea. To add fuel to the fire, William Condon, the President of the Charitable Irish Society of Halifax, intercepted some of the Irish volunteers recruited by Howe in the

United States after they arrived in Halifax, and persuaded them not to enlist; he also sent a telegram to a New York newspaper, which, by publicizing Howe's activities, made the latter's position untenable. Later, on May 26, 1856, a clash involving the Irish occurred on the Windsor railway. For some time workers from the eastern counties, Presbyterian in religion, had been taunting the Irish navvies for their belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; in return the Irish inflicted a merciless beating upon the Protestant workers on the Windsor railway who lived in Gourley's Shanty. This was the background in which a meeting was held in Halifax on June 5, to prepare an address honouring Mr. Crampton, who was passing through Nova Scotia after being recalled to Britain at the request of the American government. When a group of Irishmen sought to defeat the purpose of the meeting, Howe, his patience thoroughly exhausted, administered them a sharp rebuke. Later, when it was alleged that he had attacked the whole Irish nation and that he was threatening to organize associations similar to the American Know Nothing Lodges to trample the Catholics of the community, he defended himself in the *Morning Chronicle.* ~

[If these allegations were correct] I must have given the lie to a long life devoted to the establishment, in Nova Scotia, of political, religious and social equality. But there is not one word of truth, either in the allegations or inferences of these people. . . .

[His remarks were aimed at an Irish faction in Halifax] *and not at the Irish Nation – their liberties, or their creed.* . . . I had marked, with pain, and often with disgust, for two long years, the chuckling of this faction at every reverse met by the British arms. . . . Nine-tenths of the community . . . saw and heard what I saw and heard. They felt as I felt; and, day by day, had hard work to suppress their feelings. . . .

[The faction even interfered with his mission to the United States in 1855.] . . . If I was not arrested or my brains knocked out, by their correspondents and friends in the United States – if I was not shunned by my countrymen as a "kidnapper," on my return, the fault is none of theirs. All this I bore in silence. But, when some of these warm friends, and ardent admirers sought, in my presence, to censure me indirectly, and Mr.

Crampton directly, by defeating the object of the Meeting called by the Mayor, I thought it was about time to teach them a lesson, and let them comprehend our relative positions, and the true spirit and feeling of this community. . . .

[It is true that Irishmen supported him in the fight for responsible government.] But shall it be said that because Irishmen supported me in doing what was right, I am bound to support them in doing what is wrong? This is strange logic. . . . Am I to permit a handful of Irishmen to drive all other classes off of our public works? Am I [to] sit in silence, and hear those who sympathized with my country's enemies in war, denounce the Queen's Minister directly, and myself by implication, without remonstrance and rebuke? . . . What the interests of my country require should be done and said, that will I do and say, while Providence permits me to stand upon her soil. . . .

Of the Irish nation, or of the Irishmen in Nova Scotia, no man ever heard me breathe an ungenerous sentiment. But I am not blind to the national characteristics and foibles. I know that no people on the face of the earth have suffered more from gross *misleading*. Irish History teems with proof of this assertion, and there is scarcely a City on this Continent where men with some fluency, and little judgment, have not embroiled the emigrant with the resident population. So it shall not be here, if I can help it.

(*Morning Chronicle*, June 10, 1856)

~ At the outset Howe's attacks were directed against an Irish faction in Halifax, and certainly not against Catholics or Catholicism. In fact, the leaders of the Scottish Catholics in eastern Nova Scotia took some satisfaction in his rebuke of the Irish Catholics. But this state of affairs altered sharply after December, 1856, when a split jury permitted the persons allegedly implicated in the Gourley Shanty affair to go free. The *Halifax Catholic* gloatingly drew the moral that Protestants ought not to taunt Catholics for believing in the Doctrine of the Real Presence, particularly if the latter were of the "mercurial" Irish variety. That was too much for Howe who could endure only so much in the way of provocation before erupting. As he himself put it, he was betrayed into saying that Protestants had a perfect right to ridicule doctrines which Catholics held dear. What he meant was that, if Catholics exercised the privilege of

heaping scorn upon values which Protestants cherished, they must expect treatment in kind. Actually he believed that neither Protestants nor Catholics should exercise the privilege. ~

The right to discuss all questions or doctrines involving our worldly interests or our eternal salvation – to maintain what we believe to be true, and *to laugh at what we believe to be absurd, is the common right of every Novascotian*; and all the "mercurial" people that can be mustered will never trample it out of our hearts, or of our homesteads. This right the peasantry of our eastern Counties enjoy when at home. *They brought it with them upon the public works of their country*. It was or should have been as sacred in Gourlay's [sic] shantie as it is in any Church or Dwelling in the Metropolis.

The Editors and Correspondents of the Catholic have, week after week, for months, scoffed at and reviled every thing that British subjects value – every thing that Protestant Novascotians hold dear. . . . Presuming upon political divisions which past controversies had created, its Editors supposed that Protestants would sacrifice their religious feelings to their political interests. Holding the balance, as they assumed, between parties, a few short sighted Catholics in the capital thought they could spit upon, use and scoff at, all Protestant sects and combinations in turn. . . .

No Protestant would dare to publish such a paper as that to which we refer in any Catholic country. The man who attempted it in Rome, in Spain, or in Mexico, would soon find himself "in the Jail or the Penitentiary." Here it is published with perfect impunity, and *the difference between a Protestant and a Catholic Country is illustrated by the very impunity which it enjoys*. Everything that Nova-Scotians hold dear, sacred and rational, has been made the subject of "jeers and taunts" again and again. . . .

But the impunity that [the Catholic] enjoys in the capital Protestants are to be denied here and elsewhere. The Scotchmen and Nova Scotians may "build bridges," "quarry stones," "lay sleepers," but woe betide them if they laugh at what they do not believe. If they say a word about the Real Presence, purgatory, or the Pope. . . .

"Mercurial Irishman" would do well to remember that, outside the City of Halifax, they are but a handful of the population in any County, east or west. Their best security is

law, and order, and the preservation of the free institutions of the Country. There is no part of Nova Scotia where they could not be trampled down in a day, were the people to become "mercurial," and deal out the "brotherly love and mutual forbearance" which were displayed at Gourlay's Shantie. . . .

When our Saviour was present in the flesh, and a disciple smote one who reviled him to his face, our Lord did not shelter but rebuked the zealot. There was a "real presence" from which Christians might borrow an example. But what would he have said if the twelve apostles had set upon two or three poor men, and *in his name*, treated them as the inmates of Gourlay's house were treated? Would he have talked about "mercurial" Jews and "irritating systems of abuse," or would he not have denounced such an atrocity, if perpetrated *in his presence* as I denounce it, now that we are told that such a crime has been committed *in his name*. . . .

The consequences of this plain speaking I have duly weighed and measured. In a long public life, and in unrestrained social intercourse with thousands of human beings, no man ever heard me revile any body's religion. I respect the feelings and admire the sincerity of the Catholic whose opinions I do not share, whose ceremonies I may think superfluous. But, when he comes to propagate his religion by the bludgeon – when the liberty to criticise and scoff, which he claims and exercises, he attempts to deny to the Protestant population, my path is plain, and I tread it utterly regardless of consequences.

(Letter to the Editor, *Morning Chronicle*, December 27, 1856)

~ The bitter controversy which this letter provoked led to the estrangement of all the Nova Scotian Catholics, Scottish and French as well as Irish, from the Liberal party. In February, 1857 all the Liberal assemblymen who were Catholic, together with two Protestants from Catholic counties, deserted their party and permitted the Conservatives to assume office without benefit of an election. For a time Howe seriously contemplated heading a Protestant Alliance, but soon thought better of the idea. The bitterness resulting from these events did not quickly subside, and the religious issue was the dominant one in some counties in the election campaign of 1859. During Howe's premiership, when the Assembly was almost evenly divided along party lines, he invited some leading Scottish Catholics to join his government. He had no success, but he made it known

nonetheless that his administration would be entirely fair in its treatment of Catholics. ~

But the Doctor [Charles Tupper] tells us that Catholics are proscribed and excluded from [the] Government. On this point I wish my policy to be distinctly defined and clearly understood; . . . since I assumed the leadership of this Government, I have treated the Catholics of the Country as I have treated every other denomination, honourably and fairly. When they attempted to do wrong I resisted them. But if any man says that the principle of this Government is the exclusion of Catholics it is untrue. . . .

I say that I would be recreant to all the principles of my political life if that were true. No, sir, show me a Catholic that is entitled to my public confidence and personal friendship, and I will just as soon put him in the Council as the best Protestant in the land. . . . I never did . . . and never will lead or control any party whatever that says to any body of Christians: You will be excluded, as a matter of course, from any interest in the public affairs of the country. I believe that any public man in this country, or in any of the colonies, with their mixed populations, who should take such a stand would do violence to the public principles that ought to control him, and what is more, would make shipwreck of his reputation. . . . This government, then, is open to all.

(Speech of February 9, 1861, *British Colonist*, February 21, 1861)

As respects the Catholics, they left me foolishly and without cause, and like little Bo-peep in the nursery rhymes, I let them alone till they choose [to] come home, wagging their tails behind them. . . . They will soon tire of the short and bitter pastures of the hon. and learned member for Annapolis [J. W. Johnston], where bigotry and intolerance, hypocrisy and selfishness, are the natural products of the soil.

(Speech of March 20, 1861, *British Colonist*, April 23, 1861)

4. PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA (1860-63)

~ In 1860 Howe became Premier of Nova Scotia for the first time, although to all intents and purposes he had acted in that capacity during the Uniacke administration. His difficulties were increased because his majority was small and the opposition had been embittered by the outcome of the disputed election of 1859, whereby allegedly disqualified Liberal members

were permitted to retain their seats and to vote the Johnston administration out of office. Howe's diary recounts his activities during 1861. ~

Young's promotion to the Bench left me the leadership of the Government again with a nominal majority of 5 all told, but at least one or two of them being to say the least of it unreliable. Before the House met I had my own troubles, arising out of the embarrassments of one, and the selfishness or eccentricities of one or two more, and when it met, I had to foreshadow the policy of the future rather than explain it, and fight through a session, with an American Civil War threatening my Revenue, and my Pictou supporters demanding a Railroad. . . .

I never went through a more laborious Session. I rarely left the House at the Lunchhour but kept up my Correspondence from 1 to 3, and then often sat to 8 or 9 with no food but a few figs and crackers and a glass of Water. We got through the Session triumphantly and when it closed I should have gone out of town, and rested for a few days. I went on working for ten days clearing away the rubbish of the session and broke down at last and was ill for several days.

(*Howe Papers*, XLVIII, 88)

~ During his years as Premier Howe sometimes felt frustrated by the pettiness of provincial politics. Yet he refused to be confined by its limitations, and for a second time almost succeeded in getting agreement upon an intercolonial railway. The political difficulties in Canada defeated him in the end. A letter to his half-sister in January, 1863, indicated his enthusiasm for the project and his continuing admiration for things British. ~

I am on my way home from my seventh visit to Europe, for many reasons one of the most gratifying and triumphant that I have ever had. After two years of thought and labour I have again, with the aid of kind friends and fellow labourers, reconstructed the Railway policy and placed the Intercolonial Railroad once more within the grasp of the Colonial Legislatures. There is only one detail not settled to my entire satisfaction, and with that exception we have obtained from the Imperial Government every concession that we asked.

You know how boldly I spoke out on the Niagara frontier last summer, and how roughly I handled Noble Lords and Commoners who had attacked our Provinces. Many of my

enemies, and some of my timid friends, who do not know glorious old England as I know it, thought I dare not go to Britain after making that speech, and that I had blasted any hope of getting official promotion. . . . [But] my old friend Lord Russell has bestowed upon me, in the most gracious manner, the Commissionership of the Fisheries under the Elgin Treaty. The Salary and allowances are very much better than I get as Secretary, and besides I can live where I like. Before I came away I spent a couple of delightful days with the Duke of Newcastle [at his country estate] revelling in Pictures, Statuary, old Trees, flower gardens, and all that can give pleasure and convey instruction – to say nothing of unrestrained converse (we were alone) with one, to whom all these things are as familiar as I was with the trees of the North West Arm and whose life has been past [sic] in the companionship of his Sovereign and with the highest intellects in the Empire and in the World.

(Steamship *Africa*, at sea, *Joseph Howe Related Papers*, I)

~ An important domestic issue of these years had to do with the franchise. Howe had looked with disfavour upon the introduction of universal suffrage in 1854; hence it gave him considerable satisfaction to support the re-introduction of a property qualification for voting in 1863. Because of the Legislative Council's amendment, the change did not become effective until after the next general election. ~

What takes place at elections under the present system? Take Cumberland; and let us suppose that there are in that county 5,000 voters, 4,800 of these come up to the polls and record their votes according to their party predilections, honestly and independently. These are the men who represent the property and intelligence of the county, but they are not the persons who turn the election. The remaining 200 who make a trade of their franchise, who can be and are bought up, who have their debts forgiven – these are the men who carry the election. The sterling men of the country will continue to exercise their franchise; but the refuse of society – the men who live by elections – who would be glad if a contest occurred every month provided they had the power of basely trading away their independence for lucre, will be as they should be, disfranchised.

(Speech of March 19, 1863, *Morning Chronicle*, March 24, 1863; or Chisholm, II, 412)

~ While J. W. Johnston continued nominally to lead the opposition, its effective leader was Dr. Charles Tupper. The latter availed himself of every opportunity to bring down the government. Howe, never a party man for the mere sake of party, rebuked him on numerous occasions. ~

When time shall have mellowed his character – when he shall have got more breadth of beam to his mind, he will come perhaps to feel that to stand up and blast the reputation of a human being is not a political virtue, nor in nine cases out of ten a political necessity. . . .

I will say to the hon. member that I think he will never in this country make that use of his abilities which he ought to make; never cultivate that wide circle of friends which he should cultivate; never command that influence which he wishes to attain until he learns to have more of the milk of human kindness permeated through his mental system, more of Christian charity in dealing with his fellow-men.

(Speech of February 9, 1861, *British Colonist*, February 21, 1861)

The hon. member for Cumberland makes too many complaints against the government. If he confined himself to facts, and exhibited discretion in the choice of his weapons and time of attack, members might be content to listen to him with some patience. . . . Did he name a day – give notice of his intention – and get up a good rattling party attack, once a fortnight, or once a month, it would be all right; but these little, perpetual, peddling, snarling assaults, on all subjects, and on all occasions, make himself and his party objects of pity, and do not in anywise advance their interests. And more, sir, I am not quite sure but that these continuous attacks are lessening the effect of the hon. gentleman's speeches.

(Speech of March 16, 1863, *Morning Chronicle*, March 21, 1863)

~ To Tupper's concern that for a few months he would be drawing salaries both as Imperial Fishery Commissioner and Provincial Secretary, Howe replied on February 13, 1863. ~

Let him be comforted. My habits are pretty well known to the people of Nova Scotia. . . . I have earned a good deal of money by my private business, and in the public service, in my lifetime. Where is it? Back, as everybody knows, in the pockets of my countrymen, from whom it was received. All I need say

on this branch of the subject, all that delicacy permits me to say, is, that if my pockets are filled, it will be all the better for those whose pockets are empty.

(*Morning Chronicle*, February 17, 1863)

~ Howe was especially appalled when Tupper stated publicly that Howe's appointment as Fishery Commissioner would not be welcomed in the United States because of his recruiting activities in that country during the Crimean War. ~

I would not, had he been in my position, and I in his, have raked up circumstances that happened years ago, and brought them forward here in a vain endeavour to peril his appointment. No, sir, I would have died first. The hon. and learned member's conduct was not fair – it was not generous – it was not what one Nova Scotian had a right to expect from another under the circumstances.

(Speech of February 16, 1863, *Morning Chronicle*, February 19, 1863)

~ On February 16, 1863, Howe commented on the possibility of his remaining in the Assembly while he served as Fishery Commissioner. ~

While public duties have occupied the greatest portion of my time, I have given my evenings to books, and literature still has attractions for me which I trust it will continue to have to my dying day. I require neither the occupation nor the excitement which a seat in this House brings with it. But I can fancy important and enlarged questions coming up here, when my experience might be useful, when my voice might be raised to calm the virulence of party strife; and, in the later periods of my life, I might atone for having given perhaps too much animation to our debates in my earlier days.

(*Morning Chronicle*, February 19, 1863)

~ Yet Howe was fated never to return to the Assembly. Almost against his will, he agreed to contest Lunenburg in the general election of 1863, but both he and the Liberal administration were soundly beaten. ~

PART FOUR

WIDER HORIZONS

1. ORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRE (1846-66)

~ To Howe, responsible government meant no more than granting to colonials the minimal rights of British citizens, the right to regulate their internal affairs as they saw fit. Even before it had formally been introduced, he had set his sights upon his next objective, the recognition of the right of colonials to have some say in the determination of Empire policies. In his second series of letters to Lord John Russell in the autumn of 1846 he appealed to the British Prime Minister to lay the foundations of British power in North America on an indestructible basis by making "a wiser use . . . of the intellectual resources" of the Empire and by opening "a wider field . . . for the emulation and honourable aspirations of its public men." ~

The Boston boy may become President of the United States – the young native of Halifax or Quebec can never be anything but a member of an Executive Council, with some paltry office, paid by a moderate salary. . . .

To incorporate [the British North Americans] with the empire – to make them think and feel as Englishmen, it is clear that all the employments of the Empire must be open to them, and the highest privileges of British subjects conferred. . . . By conferring upon them the advantages of self-government, and control over their own internal affairs, a most important advance has been made towards the achievement of this happy consummation. And now is the time, before there is any wide spread discontent or clamorous demand, to anticipate and provide for, a state of feeling, which must inevitably arise out of the practical exclusion of the population from the official employments and higher honours of the Empire. . . .

There is one Department, to employment in which we fancy

we have a peculiar claim – the Colonial Office. . . . From the Bench, the Bar, the Legislature, abundance of material could be selected, to give to that Department a character for efficiency which it has rarely enjoyed; and to draw around it a degree of confidence that it can hardly hope to attain, while the leading minds produced by the great countries committed to its care are practically excluded from its deliberations. . . .

[Howe also requested colonial representation in the British Parliament.] North America is nearly as much interested in every question of commercial regulation – of foreign policy – of emigration – religious equality – peace and war, as are the inhabitants of the British Isles. If she were an independent Nation, besides controlling her internal government, she would protect her own interest in the arrangement of them all. Did the Provinces form States of the American Union, they would have their representation in Congress; and would influence, to the extent of their quota, whatever it was, the national policy. Now, my Lord, is it too much to ask, of those who desire to avert any such change of position, that analogous privileges, suited to our circumstances and claims, should be conferred? . . .

But, it may be said, if you desire representation in the Imperial Parliament, you must be prepared to part with your local Legislatures, and to submit to equality of taxation. Nothing would be fairer, if equality of representation was the thing sought – but this, for obvious reasons, would be an impolitic demand; and any scheme to carry it out, would be found, on due reflection, to be impracticable. . . . Representation in this sense, and to this extent then, is not what I desire, but a moderate degree of moral and intellectual communication between North America and the Imperial Parliament. . . .

Mark, my Lord, the effects which this system would have upon our Legislatures and upon our people. Is there a young man in North America, preparing for public life, who would be contented with the amount of study, and the limited range of information, now more than sufficient to enable him to make a figure in his Native Province? Not one; they would ever have before them the higher positions to be achieved, and the nobler field of competition on which they might be called to act. They would feel the influence of a more lively emulation, and subject themselves to a training more severe. Our Educational Institutions would improve – a higher standard of intellectual excel-

lence would be created; and not only in society would the influence be felt, but in the Courts, the Press, and in the Provincial Parliaments, there would reign a purer taste, and a more elevated style of discussion. . . .

My father left the old Colonies, at the Revolution, that he might live and die under the British flag. I wish to live and die under it too; but I desire to see its ample folds waving above a race worthy of the old banner, and of the spirit which has ever upheld it. . . . We must be Britons in every inspiring sense of the word; hence my anxiety to anticipate every generous aspiration – and to prepare the way for that full fruition of the Imperial privileges, which I trust will leave to my Countrymen nothing to complain of and nothing to desire.

(*Novascotian*, January 4 and 11, 1847; or Annand, II, 364-74)

~ To the end of his career Howe maintained that a colonial secretary who had to determine policy without assistance from anyone who had intimate personal knowledge of the colonies was placed "in worse than Egyptian bondage." For months he considered how the Colonial Secretary could best be provided with advice from men who possessed the "indisputable stamp of colonial confidence." The answer came to him in one of his flashes (*supra*, p. 126) during his railway mission to England in December, 1850. ~

Let each of the Provincial Administrations in the Colonies where responsible Government has been established, and is working successfully, send two members of the Executive Council, for the time being, to the House of Commons, to sit there as long as the Cabinets of which they were Members satisfactorily conducted Colonial affairs. This would give to Parliament full assurance that they were men of influence. To the Colonial Minister, if he chose to employ them, they would thus bring the Stamp of Colonial Confidence and approbation – These men would be listened to with respect on all Colonial questions. . . . Their minds would expand with the breadth of the arena on which they were called to play their parts and, as they won the confidence of Parliament and of the Cabinet, these men might either be employed in Downing Street – in the direct administration of Colonial Governments, or in special missions to Colonies just evolving the new principles & struggling towards the more advanced condition of Colonial development.

In all these capacities they would be useful, but they would besides attune the Colonial mind to the general tone of National Policy and sentiment. . . .

By this simple expedient, and the machinery is the least intricate that I can devise, the Startling contrast between the two branches of the Great North American family would be annihilated. Posts of honourable ambition would then equally invite us all, and men of property and even of high connections, would not hesitate to settle in [the] Provinces. . . .

(Howe to Grey, private, December 4, 1850, *Howe Papers*, VI, 303-6)

~ When Grey pointed out that colonial representation in the British Parliament necessarily implied taxation, Howe accepted the stipulation if it was insisted upon, although he hoped that the House of Commons would be less exacting. ~

The generous mode would be, for the House of Commons to admit two Executive Officers from each Province, for the present, without pecuniary stipulations. . . .

But suppose that the question were met in an exacting spirit by the House of Commons, & that a contribution was required. North America must sooner or later contemplate this side of the Picture. She must pay for National objects if she becomes a Nation. She must contribute to the Treasury of the United States if she joins the Union. But the hardship is that now we are heavily taxed [through American tariffs] for appearing to be Britons. . . . If we must be taxed again before we can be in reality what we now pay for resembling, even that would be better than the hybrid state of Political existence of which we justly complain. . . .

But this is not a question of money. It is a question of honour, strength, national integrity.

(Howe to Grey, private, December 16, 1850, *Howe Papers*, VI, 332-36)

~ On February 23, 1854, Howe spoke on J. W. Johnston's resolution favouring a union of the British North American colonies. In his address he outlined the three choices facing the colonies: annexation to the United States, which he described as a craven suggestion; union of some kind, which he considered impracticable until an intercolonial railway was built; and genuine incorporation into the Empire, upon which he lavished all his oratorical talents. ~

Sir, I do not envy our neighbours in the United States their

country, their climate or their institutions. But what I do envy them is, the boundless field of honourable emulation and rivalry in which the poorest man in the smallest State may win, not mere colonial rank and position, but the highest national honours. Here lies the marked distinction between Republican and British American. The sons of the rebels are men full-grown; the sons of the loyalists are not. . . .

What national distinction ever lights upon British America? Has she ever supplied a Governor to the Queen's widely extended dominions, a Secretary, or an under Secretary of state? Have we ever had a man to represent us in either House of Parliament, or in any Imperial department? How long is this state of pupilage to last? Not long. If British statemen do not take this matter in hand, we soon shall. I yield to no man in respect for the flag of my fathers, but I will live under no flag, with a brand of inferiority to the other British races stamped upon my brow. . . .

Look at the organization of the Colonial office; that department which is especially charged with the government of forty Colonies, and yet has not one Colonist in it! How long are we to have this play of Hamlet with Hamlet himself omitted? . . . Talk of annexation, sir! what we want is annexation to the mother country. Talk of a union of the Provinces, which, if unaccompanied with other provisions, would lead to separation! What we require is union with the empire; an investiture with the rights and dignity of British citizenship. . . .

With our maritime positions in all parts of the globe; with every variety of soil and climate; with the industrial capacity and physical resources of two hundred and sixty millions of people to rely on; what might not this empire become, if its intellectual resources were combined for its government and preservation. . . . But, sir, let the statesmen of England slumber and sleep over the field of enterprise which lies around them; let them be deluded by economists who despise Colonists, or by fanatics who preach peace at any price with foreign despots; while no provision is made to draw around the throne the hearts of millions predisposed to loyalty and affection; and the results we may surely calculate. Should the other half of this continent be lost for the want of forethought and sound knowledge, there will be trouble in the old homestead. "Shadows, clouds, and darkness," will rest upon the abode of our fathers; the free soil of England will not be long unprofaned; and the gratitude of

Turks, and the friendship of Austrians or Republican Americans, will form but a poor substitute for the hearts and hands that have been flung away.

(Annand, II, 200-206)

~ This speech, which was republished in pamphlet form in England, provoked considerable discussion, and Howe felt it necessary to meet the points raised by two Englishmen interested in colonial questions, Messrs. Adderley and Godley. To Adderley he lamented the lack of a common arena for the discussion of colonial matters; if such an arena had existed in the 1770's, the American Revolution might have been avoided. ~

[The opponents] would have buffeted each other into mutual respect. A great audience, having a common interest, would have enjoyed the sport and bestowed the prizes. Burgoyne might have been sent to write plays and Washington selected to command a Brigade in Flanders. Jefferson would probably have been a Secretary of State and the Declaration of Independence might have been indefinitely postponed.

But there was no National Council, except in the restricted sense of the term – no arena, where the able men of the two Continents could meet and argue each other into mutual respect and the appreciation of sound views of a Common policy. . . . By and bye 13 Noble Provinces were "rubbed off" and the men for whom no room could be made in old St. Stephens, or in the Army, or Navy or Diplomatic Services of the Empire, made room for themselves. They signed Treaties in old Coats, and sat down with Kings and Princes, having taught those who were too conceited or too careless to make "changes" which common sense might have shown to be indispensible, some "fundamental" experiments which your Englishman of the present day still gazes at with wonder, but hardly yet appears to comprehend. . . .

[Howe disagreed with Godley's contention that the colonies which separated from Britain were likely to remain friendly.] Fifty soap bubbles may be blown into the air, each beautiful in its perfect organization and entire independence, but the boy who blows them is not much strengthened by the diversion, and certainly never expects to see them again when once they are over the fence. Now John Bull blowing up, and blowing off Colonies in this fashion would make a good frontispiece for Punch. John blew off thirteen of these at one angry puff, and there are now States on this side of the Atlantic as perfect

Colonies as ever swarmed off from the crowded hives of ancient Greece. But how much of sympathy and succour have they ever given to the Mother Country? When Bonaparte was assembling his armies upon the British Channel where then were Mr. Godley's Greeks? Invading our Canadian frontiers. When again the Czar threatens all Europe, who hears of one word of sympathy, or one act of generous co-operation? Instead, we have grumbling, and menace, till all North American Fisheries are given up, and bullying insolence immediately after. . . .

[Howe reminded Godley that the colonials had an inheritance in Britain itself.] What we venerate and regard with an intensity of feeling that few men seek to disguise, are the British Islands themselves, with the treasures of Art and Literature – the records of Freedom and of high achievement, which they contain. Whether you allow it or not we feel that we have a common right to inheritance in much that our ancestors have bequeathed. The right of the resident Englishmen to property in the soil, and to all the wealth that it sustains, is fairly conceded, but we claim to participate in all that our forefathers have transmitted that ministers to national pride and we think that we ought, while we remain part and parcel of the British Empire, to have a fair field of competition on which to illustrate, side by side, with the other branches of the family the heroic or intellectual qualities which "run in the blood." Let me individualize a little. I walk into Westminster Abbey and the Howe banner hangs as high as any other in Henry the 7ths Chapel. I walk into Greenwich Hospital and there stands Black Dick, in white marble, but with the broad chest and ample forehead which the Howes "of this ilk" have never wanted. Now I feel that I have a property in these two noble piles which our common ancestors built and bequeathed, quite equal to that of any gentleman in London. . . .

(Howe to C. B. Adderley, November 4, 1854, *Howe Papers*, VII, 166-82)

~ To Francis Hincks, who scorned the idea of colonial representation in the British Parliament, Howe replied with considerable asperity in August, 1855. ~

What remedy had I in 1852, when Lord Grey's despatch shattered the noblest scheme of Colonial policy ever devised. . . . None whatever suited to the magnitude of the wrong or of the occasion. Borne down by the weight of authority, which I had

no means of resisting here, I would have given all that I was worth, or ever will be, for the opportunity of appealing from Earl Grey to the House of Commons, for the chance of winning from the Imperial Government a reconsideration of my policy. I might have failed. . . . But what then? We should all live and die with the satisfactory reflection that we had been heard . . . sources of irritation would be removed, and general principles, applicable to the whole Empire, would be evolved by every fresh discussion. . . .

[Howe examined the question of mines and minerals.] You [Hincks] used to have a keen eye for a grievance, but I fear prosperity has clouded your vision. You used to strain at a gnat, and now you can scarcely see a camel. . . .

Let me fancy that all the mineral wealth of Canada . . . were . . . locked up [by an improvident grant to a royal duke as in Nova Scotia.] What would the people of that Province do? Resort to the old mode of furnishing facts to members of Parliament, and sending addresses and agents to the bar of the House of Commons, as they did for half a century? No. They would resort to their modern and more effective expedients – a successful or an unsuccessful rebellion. They would burn down a Parliament House, and pelt a Governor General. . . .

Now, what I want is, that the Colonial mind should be called to aid in the discussion and adjustment of . . . relations [with our British brethren and our foreign neighbours.] That the Queen should have the benefit of the advice of her Colonial subjects on all such questions; that Parliament should consult with them; that the people of the British Islands should be taught to regard them as parties concerned; to respect and to rely upon them. Is this an unreasonable request? . . .

[It would be difficult to show] that the Colonist's career does not practically stop when he is a Provincial minister. I contend that it does; that, having reached that point, he is hedged in by barriers which he cannot overleap; that, thenceforward, he must "fling away ambition;" that he has got into a cul-de-sac; that he finds John Bull, looking very like a beadle, guarding the rich scenery beyond, and saying to him, as he marks the expression of his longing eye, "No thoroughfare here." I can point to the Winthrops, the Cushings, the Rushes, the Websters – the descendants of the men who tore down the British flag, and drove out the Loyalists in 1783 – representing their country in a National Legislature, or in every court in Europe; and I can

find a Buffalo schoolmaster or a New Hampshire lawyer presiding over the Union; while I challenge the world to show me a Colonist in our National Legislature, in any Imperial department, or who is now, or has been for half a century, Governor of the smallest colony within the Queen's dominions. That is my argument; answer it if you can.

(Annand, II, 448-55)

~ During his railway mission to Britain in 1861 Howe and the Canadian delegates became indignant at the lack of attention paid them and their wives by governmental officials. Accordingly Howe proposed the formation of a permanent organization in London for the promotion of British-American interests. His idea came to fruition in the British Empire Association. ~

I have come to the conclusion that we ought to have some association here that will form a common centre for the collection and diffusion of information about the Colonies. Around which Colonial gentlemen coming from the Provinces can rally, and through which they may appeal for justice and fair consideration either to the Government or the people of England. . . .

Every thing should be done here to make the Provinces known – to make them attractive, and an Association in London, with a working Committee not formed exclusively of Grand Trunk people, but combining all the North American interests, would do a vast deal for these Provinces and for themselves.

(Howe to Baring, December 31, 1861, *Howe Papers*, VIII, 167-74)

He [Howe] would say a word or two as regards the "British Empire Association." Whenever he had been in England, he had always been struck with the great difference that existed between the position of a British Colonist and a citizen of the United States. An American goes to England, and at once goes to his minister, and when he had been dining there, he had invariably found eight or ten at the table. Every one of them enjoyed advantages which a British American did not. Take the case of a Halifax merchant. He goes to London, and perhaps knows nobody; he will find, in case of difficulty, that he does not possess one fiftieth part of the advantages enjoyed by a subject of one of the smallest states of Europe, who has his minister to apply to. It was this state of things that led to the formation of this association. . . . One of the objects was to collect and diffuse correct information on colonial matters, and to afford a place

where colonists could meet each other. Men of the highest standing and position in England were connected with it. Mr. Crawford, a man of great wealth and influence, M.P. for the city of London, was the Vice President, and they had already raised £2,000 stg. towards its funds.

(Speech in the Assembly of April 9, 1862, *Morning Chronicle*, April 12, 1862)

~ During the 1860's the American Civil War and the Fenian Raids made British North American defence a much debated topic. When the Parliament of Canada defeated the Militia Bill of 1862, some members of the House of Lords like Lord Grey and Lord Ellenborough talked disparagingly about the corruption of the public men of Canada and their lack of responsibility in not providing for their own defence. At the same time Goldwin Smith was suggesting the immediate cutting of the ties between Britain and the colonies. In April Howe commented privately upon the situation to the Colonial Secretary; in September he replied publicly to both groups in a speech at Niagara on "The Future of British North America." Here for the first time he expressed confidence that the colonies, if abandoned, could make their own way. ~

What makes me more anxious even than the Railroad, is the bad tone of the Debate in Parliament on the Colonial defences. Some of the speeches were in very bad taste and calculated to give great offence on this side of the Atlantic. If we are driven to shape our future without any regard to England's honour and interest (which appears to be the advice given by some of these wise acres) we can make a Nation sooner than they think; but to me it appears like madness, by silly speeches to wound the susceptibilities of a loyal and gallant people to set them thinking of separation for no greater advantage than to leave England without a Harbour, a spar or a ton of Coal on the Continent of America.

I wish your Lordship would send me to settle this War question with the different Provinces and to adjust on some principle intelligible to us all, the strength of garrisons in time of peace and the proportions in which the burthens of War whenever it comes ought to be borne. These matters may be adjusted by negotiation, but they never will by speeches flung to and fro across the sea which only create irritation.

(Howe to Newcastle, April 17, 1862, *Howe Papers*, VIII, 279-82)

We are told by some of these learned lords and erudite commoners and able editors in England that Canada has become so corrupt and politically demoralized that it ought to be abandoned. . . .

When did we first hear any charge of corruption made against the public men of Canada? It was not made . . . till Mr. Jackson, a member of the British Parliament, set his foot in Canada, and with the power and influence and large expenditure of a combined body of contractors at his back, began to operate on the Legislature of Canada. Never till that hour was the taint of corruption imputed to the public men of this Province. . . .

It would be becoming in Lord Grey to reflect that but for his breach of faith and violation of the pledge he gave, that road would have been made five years ago, and when we were threatened with war last winter, the British troops could have been thrown into Canada from the seaboard in forty-eight hours, and all the waste and expense incurred in sending the troops by land at an inclement season of the year would have been spared. I charge upon Lord Grey all that expense and all that waste, as well as the anxiety caused at that time by the insecure position of Canada. . . . The black history of that railway transaction has not yet been written; and perhaps it may not be written in our time. But, if ever all the facts should be brought to light, I believe it will be shown, that by some astute manipulation the British Provinces on that occasion were sold for the benefit of English contractors and English members of Parliament. . . .

And I should like to ask Mr. Goldwin Smith how he would like British America severed from the mother country, and England left without a harbour on the continent of America, into which her ships could go for a spar or a ton of coal. . . . I have travelled through the mother country, and marked the evidences of its power and greatness, but, after all, England occupies but a small speck on the earth's surface. And much as I desire to maintain the integrity of this great empire, and believe that keeping all together we will be able to keep sacred for ever the old cradle of our race, yet, if Mr. Smith's ideas should prevail, and the evil day should ever come when England, Ireland and Scotland should turn to British America and say – you are corrupt, you are craven, you are valueless; go your way, we do not want connection with you – I would see it

with sorrow and sadness, but more on account of England than on account of the future of British America. If we are driven to contemplate such a condition of things . . . then I could only say when it came, I feared not for the destinies of British America. To suppose that, with such a country as we have under our feet, with its magnificent proportions, its fertile soil, its noble rivers, its open harbours, its sea-coast pregnant with life, we should permit ourselves for lack of diplomacy or of arms to lose our independence, would be to suppose us cravens and fools indeed. The men who had fought the battles of self-government for twenty years and achieved the victory had shown that they were capable of organizing North America into a great nation. We did not desire premature independence; we asked to be permitted to maintain our allegiance; but, if our connection with England, Scotland and Ireland is to be preserved, it must be an honourable connection, one we can maintain without exposing ourselves to reproach for exercising the powers which our constitution gives us.

(Chisholm, II, 375-82)

~ During Howe's visit to England in 1865 Earl Russell requested him to prepare another paper on "The Organization of the Empire." In this paper, which was published in pamphlet form the following year, Howe proposed for the first time that the colonies should impose both taxation and compulsory military service as a contribution to the defence of the Empire. ~

[Howe wondered if twenty years hence Britain would be able to contend with a combination of the United States and either of the great military and naval powers of Europe.] Now I would lift this question above the range of doubt or apprehension, and prepare for all eventualities, by such an organization of the empire as would enable the Sovereign to command its entire physical force. . . .

[The young American rushes to protect his capital] because he has perfect citizenship, which includes the control of his foreign policy and representation in the national council. That is the weak point in our case, but let us see if it cannot be met by such reasonable concessions and appeals to the good sense of our people as suit their practical turn of thought, and would give to the colonies prepared for it a direct influence in the national councils, without disorganizing the political machinery already working so well. . . .

[Howe then repeated his proposals of 1850 and 1854 by which colonies of higher political status would be permitted to send members of their cabinets to the British Parliament.] But . . . might not these colonial representatives combine and form a brigade, embarrassing governments and obstructing public business in pursuit of anti-British or other unworthy objects? There is no danger of this. These men would represent communities wide as the poles asunder. . . . They would know less of each other and of each other's interests than the body of Englishmen, among whom they were thrown, would perhaps know of them all . . . they might sometimes throw into debates the fruits of long experience and the subtle vivacity of very accomplished minds; but I cannot conceive with what designs, or under what leadership, they could possibly combine for objects that were not legitimate. . . .

[At the same time] I would proceed to treat the whole empire as the British Islands are treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in war, and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the national defence. . . .

As respects the mode in which this contribution should be levied, there are many reasons why a tax on imports should be preferred. Direct taxes are easily collected in a densely peopled country like England, where everybody can be got at, and where every acre of land has a marketable value. In the Provinces direct taxes often cost more than they come to, because the scarcity of money in new settlements, the distance to be travelled by the collectors, and the difficulty of enforcing payment if there is evasion or resistance, renders this by far the least satisfactory mode of collecting revenue. But, added to their ad valorem duties, the tax for national defence could, if fairly adjusted, be paid by all the colonies without restricting their commerce or being burthensome to their industry. . . .

If there are any communities of British origin anywhere who desire to enjoy all the privileges and immunities of the Queen's subjects without paying for and defending them, let us ascertain where and who they are – let us measure the proportions of political repudiation now, in a season of tranquillity, when we have leisure to gauge the extent of the evil and to apply correctives, rather than wait till war finds us unprepared and leaning upon presumptions in which there is no reality.

(Chisholm, II, 497-505)

~ In the summer of 1865 a convention of representatives of the commercial interests of British North America and the northern and western states of the United States took place at Detroit. Howe spoke for the provinces and won an initially hostile audience over to expressing unanimous approval for the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. "I have," he wrote Mrs. Howe, "won the greatest triumph of my life." In the same speech he outlined his views of the relations which should exist between "the great branches of the British family." ~

Sir, we are here to determine how best we can draw together in the bonds of peace, friendship and commercial prosperity the great branches of the British family. In the presence of this great theme all petty interests should stand rebuked – we are not dealing with the concerns of a city, a province, or a state, but with the future of our race in all time to come. Some reference has been made to "elevators" in your discussions. What we want is an elevator to lift our souls to the height of this great argument. Why should not these three great branches of the family flourish, under different systems of government, it may be, but forming one grand whole, proud of a common origin of their advanced civilization? We are taught to reverence the mystery of the Trinity, and our salvation depends on our belief. The clover lifts its trefoil leaves to the evening dew, yet they draw their nourishment from a single stem. Thus distinct, and yet united, let us live and flourish. Why should we not? For nearly two thousand years we were one family. Our fathers fought side by side at Hastings, and heard the curfew toll. They fought in the same ranks for the sepulchre of our Saviour; in the earlier and later civil wars. We can wear our white and red roses without a blush, and glory in the principles those conflicts established. Our common ancestors won the Great Charter and the Bill of Rights, established free Parliaments, the Habeas Corpus and trial by jury. Our jurisprudence comes down from Coke and Mansfield to Marshall and Story, rich in knowledge and experience which no man can divide. From Chaucer to Shakespeare our literature is a common inheritance, Tennyson and Longfellow write in one language which is enriched by the genius developed on either side of the Atlantic. . . . It is true that in eighty-five years we have had two wars – but what then? Since the last we have had fifty years of peace, and there have been more people killed in a single campaign in the late civil war,

than there were in the two national wars between this country and Great Britain. You hope to draw together the two conflicting elements and make them one people. And in that task I wish you God speed! And in the same way I feel that we ought to rule out everything disagreeable in the recollection of our old wars, and unite together as one people for all time to come. I see around the doors the flags of the two countries. United as they are there, I would ever have them draped together, fold within fold, and let

Their varying tints unite,
And form in heaven's light
One Arch of peace.

(Chisholm, II, 438-40)

2. IMPERIAL APPOINTMENT: "MY HIGHEST AMBITION"

~ For a period of seven years starting in 1855 Howe addressed letters to successive colonial secretaries and other British ministers, seeking an Imperial appointment, and especially employment at the Colonial Office. One of his biographers, J. A. Roy, called this quest for office "one of the most humiliating and self-abasing dunnings of Downing Street on record." But however it may be judged, nothing could be more natural. Howe had exhausted the range of political ambition in Nova Scotia; by this time the position of Chief Railway Commissioner was presenting little in the way of challenge and his restless nature had again asserted itself; the vision of an Empire organized to promote the well-being of all its citizens was uppermost in his mind; his self-confidence made him certain that the talents which he had put to good use in Nova Scotia could be employed to advantage in perfecting the organization of the Empire. In the end he had to be satisfied with the Imperial Fishery Commissionership which, despite its satisfactory emoluments, gave him no opportunity to influence policy. The letters which follow indicate the nature of Howe's requests and his growing frustration because of his lack of success. ~

My whole life has been passed in the study of Colonial questions – in the close observation of the working of British American, and Colonial Institutions, . . . in my own Country I can win nothing more. In England I flatter myself that I could render important service, and believe that my appointment

would not only be regarded as a compliment paid to the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island where I am best known, but be received as the announcement of a new policy by which the highest Civil employments of the Crown were to be thrown open to the Queen's colonial subjects. . . .

In 1838 when the forces of the United States threatened to overrun the Province of New Brunswick, though leading the political opposition of the Provincial Government of the day, and at the head of a majority of 2/3rds of the House, I at once tendered support to the Administration, drew and seconded Resolutions placing £100,000 and the whole militia force of the Province at the disposal of the Lieutenant Governor. This movement, I have reason to believe, saved much trouble, as it was decisive of the state of feeling in the Maritime Provinces.

Again, when the Canadian Rebellion broke out the steps taken by my friends in and out of the House at once cut the disaffected off from all hope of sympathy or assistance from the Lower Provinces.

When recently War was declared, as Provincial Secretary and Leader of the Government I moved and carried unanimously an Address to the Crown placing every soldier in the Province at the Queen's disposal and offering to defend it at our own cost and with our own people till the War was over.

Of my capacity as a public writer, or speaker, it may not be becoming to say much. The Pamphlets addressed to your Lordship on public questions in 1839 and 1846, and the letters addressed to Lord Grey in 1851 may be referred to, if they have not been forgotten. My speeches on the resources of the Colonial Empire, at Southampton, and on Colonial Representation in the Imperial Parliament delivered in our own Legislature last year are perhaps within your Lordship's reach as they were published in England.

(Howe to Russell, March 15, 1855, *Howe Papers*, VII, 197-206)

A colonial Governorship, if there was a vacancy, I would not refuse, but I would prefer employment in your Department here, or in some other, with the hope that I might win my way into Parliament, distinguish myself by my pen, or by the intelligent dispatch of the business entrusted to my care. To get into Parliament first, and aspire to office afterwards, I am aware is the ordinary rule, but this might be waived in favour of a person

who has held all the principal offices in his Province and served the Queen in other capacities.

If employed by your Lordship I am quite sure that not only in the formation of Colonial Constitutions and the better organization of the outlying portions of the Empire, could I be useful, but that my long experience as a public writer might be turned to account in the Controversies which perpetually arise. . . .

I have been an attentive student of British Parliamentary Speeches and political literature for twenty years. To win a position here, in the heart of my fatherland, is my highest ambition. If no career can be opened for one so trained and so disposed, the conclusion is depressing.

(Howe to Russell, July 3, 1855, *Howe Papers*, VII, 227-32)

[If Mr. Hincks's appointment as Governor of Barbados and the Windward Islands] be followed up by judicious selections, from time to time, as fair opportunities occur, a new spirit will be infused into all the Colonies. If it be not, it will only be regarded as an indication of the strength of English combinations, which that gentleman has served, and which others, and myself among the number have not conciliated by the freedom with which we have expressed independent opinions.

As my letter is to be placed on record, I would be glad, with your permission, to chiefly found my claim to consideration on the service which I have rendered as the exponent and advocate of the new system of Administration that pervades British America, and which we call Responsible Government.

If that system be a vast improvement, ultimately destined to confer blessings on the whole Colonial Empire, I think it will be admitted in all the Maritime Provinces of British America at least, that my claims springing from its early and consistent advocacy, both as a public Journalist and Legislator, very nearly resemble those which, in the case of Mr. Hill in another branch of the public service the country has honourably recognized.

(Howe to Molesworth, September 10, 1855, *Howe Papers*, VII, 376-78)

If Her Majesty would honour me with the appointment of Governor of British Oregon, I believe that I could, in a short time, lay the foundations of a noble Colony. Many British Subjects that now go from Home or from the Northern Provinces would follow me there. It would not be difficult, to attract a great many now within the United States territory to reside again under the old flag. Chinese would come in, as they do now

to California and Australia, and make useful settlers. Their children, born upon the soil, would know nothing of the Celestial Empire, but grow up in attachment to our own. There is no reason why the spare labour of the world should drift into the United States, if it can be attracted to British possessions, and England should have within her own territory in Oregon a commercial emporium, from which lines of steam communication might soon radiate, and through which she might herafter [sic] exercise a powerful influence in all that part of the world.

(Howe to the Earl of Derby, June 16, 1858, *Howe Papers*, VII, 537-38)

I think I mentioned to you my determination never again to accept of any subordinate office under any Lieutenant Governor. I shall adhere to that determination. If her Majesty's Government will not promote me I will maintain myself elsewhere with my pen, and those who compell to this alternative after twenty five years of conspicuous public service may enjoy the glory of the spectacle. With my Book [i.e., the Annand collection of Howe's speeches and letters] on the Library of every man eminent in the Colonies and in the United States, they will recognize my claims and the intellectual position I have won, if my Sovereign does not.

(Howe to Sir Gaspard le Marchant, November 29, 1858, *Howe Papers*, VII, 579)

[These volumes contain] the record of a life spent in teaching Governors, & Secretaries of State the science of Colonial Govt and in the service of a Sovereign who, in the meantime, has promoted all sorts of simples and blockheads over my head.

(Howe to Sir William Bridges, Nov. 29, 1858, *Howe Papers*, VII, 574)

3. "THIS CRAZY CONFEDERACY"

~ Somehow the myth has been created that Howe, in opposing Confederation, adopted a position which was entirely contrary to his previous utterances favouring an intercolonial union. Interspersed throughout his letters and speeches there are, it is true, many statements in which he declared himself (as in 1851) to be looking "hopefully forward to the period when these splendid Provinces, with the population, the resources, and the intelligence of a nation, will assume a national character." But whenever he spoke in more than general terms, the difficulties in the way of union always seemed to him to make the prospects forbidding in the immediate future. Early illustrations of this

attitude may be found in speeches delivered in the Assembly on April 16, 1838 and February 12, 1840, and in a letter written to Christopher Dunkin of Lower Canada in 1839. ~

Respecting the confederation, it should be admitted that benefits would occur – the regulation of trade, a Court of Appeal for the Colonies, and other good results might be expected; but the subject should be approached with great delicacy. The House should be careful how it put a recommendation on record which might be cited at a future day. Nova Scotia was one of the smallest of the Colonies, and might suffer in the arrangement. They might find that a confederation, instead of leaving the Province with its present evils in connection with the Colonial Office, would establish an Office in the back woods of Canada, more difficult of access than that in London. A Prince of the Blood perhaps would be sent out, with a large retinue of retainers, to be provided for as the Sovereign and Court of the new State.

(*Novascotian*, May 31, 1838; or Chisholm, I, 185)

The question of a Legislative Union or Confederation appears to me to be fraught with more of difficulty than that of local responsibility and I very much doubt whether any Act could be framed by the British Parliament that would be acceptable to the Colonists, and certainly none ought to be passed that had not been fully discussed and deliberately sanctioned by them. If once the whole of the Colonies were united under one Government they would be practically independent, at least so it appears to me, and if they were not, the local, the general, and the imperial governments, would give us so much machinery that it would be difficult to keep the whole in harmonious motion. Perhaps I may have been led to view this scheme with more indifference or with less favor from the vast extent of frontier, in the direct protection of which Nova Scotia, which is very nearly surrounded by water, would be involved, and from the fear that the seat of government would be nearly as far from us as Downing Street now is. I am free to confess however that my opinions are by no means formed on this subject, and that I am not strongly prejudiced on either side.

(Howe to Dunkin, October 23, 1839, *Howe Letters*, pp. 24-25)

His [Howe's] imagination had been excited by the [confederation] project of Earl Durham – he felt that it would present

many advantages and remove many difficulties – but the conclusion he had at length arrived at was, that it would be fraught with danger. The advantages would be, in regulating the Currency, the Post Office, the Commercial System, and internal Improvements. The difficulties would be, that there would be an immense frontier to defend – that there would be a large body of population lying between Nova Scotia and the British part of Canada, which population, from peculiar circumstances, and its natural character, could not, in any confederation, offer advantages to the lower Colonies. They would be continually embroiled in difficulties which they should have nothing to do with. . . . His impression was, that, if a confederation should be made, the lower Colonies were quite large enough for the object – but, perhaps, they need not even go that far for fifty years to come. . . .

(*Novascotian*, March 5, 1840)

~ When J. W. Johnston proposed an intercolonial union in 1854, Howe insisted that an intercolonial railway must come first. ~

Having discussed the question of annexation, let me inquire how else could we organize ourselves into a nation. By forming North America into a kingdom or confederation by itself, and establishing friendly connections with other countries, with the entire concurrence of our brethren at home. . . .

But, sir, I will say to the member for Annapolis, that before we can have this organization, or any other, we must have railroads. The company which has made a line of railway from Hamilton to Windsor, Canada West, deserve great credit for their enterprise and energy. I admit that the Grand Trunk Company of Canada is preparing to connect a great part of that country with these indispensable lines of communication; but, sir, it will take years to complete what Canada has begun; and then we have New Brunswick between us. It is clear we cannot have a united Parliament without railroads; for if any of us were summoned to Quebec to-morrow we should have to travel from the end of our own country to its metropolis through a foreign State. We must have railroads, first; and then, take my word for it, the question we are now discussing will assume a form and shape that will soon lead to a tangible solution.

(Annand, II, 191-93)

~ In 1860 Howe told Hon. John Ross of Newfoundland that he had no clear-cut opinion on colonial union. ~

My advice to you is, to consult your colleagues. If you are all in favour of Union, pass a Minute to that effect, send it to the other colonies and invite a Conference. . . . I am in favour of elevating British America by every fair means, and opening a widening field for her public men. But whether that can be best done by uniting the four Maritime Provinces or by a union of the whole is a question floating in my mind, which our conference perhaps might solve.

(Howe to Ross, August 14, 1860, *Howe Papers*, VII, 691-92)

~ In 1861 Howe moved a resolution in the Assembly which empowered the delegates proceeding to Canada in connection with the intercolonial railroad to discuss intercolonial union as well. Howe explained the background of this resolution at a meeting in Truro on June 4, 1867. ~

In 1861 I wanted to revive the question of the Intercolonial Railway. . . . I wanted to unite both parties on the subject, and as on former occasions, I had tried to unite Tupper and Johnston, I went this time to John Tobin who had lately controlled them both with the eight or nine [Catholic] votes at his command. I said to him, "Tobin I hope you will support a resolution for the Intercolonial Railway." His answer was: "I will, but why not go for a union of the Provinces." Now, you must know that Mr. Tobin used to go to Canada sometimes, and D'Arcy McGee used to come down occasionally and sleep with John. Finding it necessary to move forward I said "I am ready to discuss anything, but I see great difficulties in the way." Then I moved a resolution about the railway, and another one taking power to discuss the question of union. Now a man may take power to discuss a change in his religion, but that does not bind him to change it. One of you may talk about buying a horse but that does not bind you to buy him. Sometime a young man discusses for a good while whether he will marry a girl or not, but he would not consider it right that an action for breach of promise should be brought against him if he never promised. . . . We passed both resolutions and some of us went to Canada. We there discussed the subject of the railway so as to get that matter in hand and disposed of. The other was discussed in such a way

as brought us to the conclusion to let it stick by the wall, and the resolution we came to after full debate, every man of us . . . was, that a political union with Canada involved so many difficulties that until the road was built and intercourse between our people established it was folly to discuss it.

(*Morning Chronicle*, June 7, 1867)

~ Howe spoke exuberantly of the early prospects of union only once – at a highly convivial affair on August 13, 1864, during the visit to Halifax of a large number of public men from Canada. ~

A race against time is generally a hard race, but a race against Sunday morning at this hour is harder still. Twelve o'clock is fast approaching. There are a thousand things I might say, but there are only ten minutes to say them in. . . . I am not of those who thank God that I am a Nova Scotian merely, for I am a Canadian as well. . . . I have looked across the broad continent at the great territory, which the Almighty has given us for an inheritance, and studied the mode by which it could be consolidated, the mode by which it could be united, the mode by which it could be made strong and vigorous, while the old flag still floats over the soil. I am delighted to see such a scene as this, which gives promise that that which was the dream of my boyhood will be realized before I die. . . . Thank God . . . her Majesty's subjects . . . may . . . look forward to the time when we should make a new England here; not a new England with republican institutions, but a new England with monarchical institutions. I have always been in favour of the Intercolonial Railway. I wish every now and again to see the seething falls of Montmorenci, to see the Indians of Loretto dancing about the silvery stream; I want to visit Canada not once in a lifetime, not once in five or six years, but once a year, twice a year. And I want the western men to come down here to see the ocean, to come down when they have got the fever and ague, and bathe themselves here. The pool of Bethesda is nothing to the ocean, and when they are bilious, and fever and ague racks their bones, let them leave Canada behind them and plunge into the cooling flood. Let them never forget that wealth and civilization and power dwell beside the sea, and he who attempts to found an empire without a junction in the ocean, endeavours to work out a problem which history proved to be impossible. With the territory of Canada, with the rivers of Nova Scotia, with the

inexhaustible fisheries, what a country to live in! And why should union not be brought about? Is it because we wish to live and die in our insignificance, that we would sooner make money, than that our country should grow? God forbid! [He had heard rumours that the province of Canada was to be split in two again.] O, my friends, . . . go back to your homes, and say that there is at least one Nova Scotian honest enough to say to you this – that if you do that, you will commit an act of political suicide, and, although I ought not perhaps to give you the advice, I would rather see every public man upon both sides of politics crucified, than I would divide Canada now that Canada is united. Join the Maritime Provinces if you can; but, at any rate, stick together, hold your own. Let the dog return to his vomit rather than Canada to division. In conclusion, I am pleased to think the day is rapidly approaching when the Provinces will be united, with one flag above our heads, one thought in all our bosoms, with one Sovereign, and one Constitution.

(*Morning Chronicle*, August 16, 1864; or Chisholm, II, 432-34)

~ Since Howe was an Imperial officer, he could not give his opinion of the Quebec Resolutions openly, but nothing debarred him from giving it anonymously. This he did in "The Botheration Letters," a series of editorials which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* between January 11 and March 2, 1865. In the second letter he argued that any attempt to make a British North American Parliament work harmoniously with provincial legislatures under a federal system would be certain to end in failure. ~

It is said that a great many persons have, from time to time, expressed themselves in favour of some sort of a Union, and it is asked what did they mean. They may have meant many things, but assuredly no sane man ever meant what is now proposed.

We had two examples to guide us, that of England and that of the United States. The delegates offer us the Constitution of neither. England tried to work an Imperial Parliament in harmony with Local Legislatures, found the system impracticable, and swept them both away. Why shall we try over again an experiment which the experience of the Mother Country condemns? This was done, we are told, to satisfy the French Canadians. But does not anybody, with the smallest amount of

political sagacity, foresee what will be the result? Ever since the Union of the two Provinces, the French Canadians, by sticking together, have controlled the Legislation and Government of Canada. They will do the same thing in a larger Union, and, as the English will split and divide, as they always do, the French members will, in nine cases out of ten, be masters of the situation. But should a chance combination thwart them, then they will back their Local Legislature against the United Parliament, and, in less than five years, will as assuredly separate from the Confederacy as Belgium did from Holland. . . .

We have said that the United States presented the model of a Confederacy. So they did . . . but let it be borne in mind that all the prosperity with which the United States astonished the world, was achieved under their old Constitutions, and that all the misery, bloodshed and financial ruin, have resulted from the attempt to over-ride the State rights, and to give to the General Government powers analogous to those which are claimed for the Government at Ottawa. . . .

This hybrid resembles nothing on this continent, or on the other. The fare presented to us is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. The General Government, having none of the duties to discharge which gave weight and dignity to the Government of the United States, the Provincial Governments are to be stripped of half their functions in order that it may have something to do. The Provincial Parliaments will have scarcely more weight or dignity than the City Council, and of this we are quite sure, that neither Mr. Archibald, Mr. McCully nor Dr. Tupper would take a seat in ours, were it offered free of cost and charges.

But we are told that our Constitution is to be a new experiment. Well, the British Constitution which we enjoy now, has been matured by the wisdom of centuries. It was secured to us by men who devoted twenty years of life to its consolidation. The American Constitution was framed by a body of the ablest men that ever appeared upon this continent, who devoted to its every detail months of anxious consideration. The Quebec Constitution was framed in a fortnight, amidst exhausting festivities . . . and it is now presented to us in a spirit so presumptuous that any respectable person who questions its wisdom is brow-beaten as though he were about to commit a crime. Is this wise, is it decent, when all that we have is to be swept away by its adoption?

(Botheration Letter No. 2, *Morning Chronicle*, January 13, 1865)

~ About the same time Howe was giving his reaction to Earl Russell. ~

There is now no doubt that there is a large majority in most if not in all of the Maritime Provinces against [the Quebec scheme]. The feeling of opposition has been intensely aggravated by the declaration of the Delegates that they intended to attempt to press the measure through the existing Legislatures, elected for no such purpose, without submitting it fairly to the constituencies.

If an attempt of this kind is made, I think, in this Province it will fail, even in the present House – if this measure is sent to the country it would in my opinion be rejected by an overwhelming majority; indeed I doubt if one County out of the eighteen, can be got to sustain it.

In England no important change in the machinery of Government is made without an appeal to the Country. . . .

I hope this will not be attempted [here], and if it is that her Majesty's Government will shake themselves clear of the odium of having counselled or commanded any such coups de main.

[Howe then listed five objections to the Quebec Resolutions.]

1. That, by adopting the principle of Representation by population, the Maritime Provinces will be forever swamped by the Canadians.

2. That, if the Canadas, always in trouble of some sort, and two or three times in open rebellion, should repeat such eccentricities, we should be compromised, and our connexion with the Mother Country endangered.

3. Because the plan of double Legislatures, tried in Scotland and Ireland and swept away, is cumbrous and expensive, and cannot be carried out without raising our ad valorem duty, which is now only 10 percent to 20.

4. That, when we raise our duties to this point, for the benefit of 3,000,000 of Canadians, we burthen our trade with the Mother Country and with our British brethren in 50 other Colonies scattered all over the world.

5. That when the Tariff is thus raised but £250,000 currency will be left for defence, a sum utterly inadequate, for any such purpose while nothing is gained by weakening the unity of command and controll now possessed by Her Majesty's Government.

(Howe to Russell, private, January 19, 1865, *Howe Papers*, VIII, 572-77)

~ Howe still contended that the colonies ought to develop other ties before political union could become practicable. ~

We have all been for 20 years trying to promote *an industrial union of the Provinces* by which they should be bound together by Railroads, strengthened by Emigration, and elevated by an active internal trade, and enabled by a few simple changes in our militia laws to lean upon each other for mutual defence. . . . Canada seems to be always in trouble and conflict . . . and we think it more prudent when people who have the same rights as we have, tell us that Parliamentary Government is impossible, to keep clear of the mess. . . .

What I would do if I had influence in Canada, would be to throw over the double majority system – preserve the Union, give Upper Canada a reasonable increase of Representation . . . make the Intercolonial Road . . . add a few clauses to the Militia Laws by which the whole population might be made available for defence in either Province, and in the meantime combine all the Provinces in a strong effort to re-establish the Reciprocity Treaty. When all this was done I would leave the people thus brought together *and combined into an industrial and defensive union* to seek more intimate political relations as time and mutual intercourse might incline us to accept them.

(Howe to Hon. T. E. Campbell, April 3, 1865, *Howe Papers*, VIII, 580-84)

~ Since the work of the Fishery Commission was coming to an end and no other Imperial Office was forthcoming, Howe seriously considered an offer from W. B. Morrell of the New York *Albion* to edit that paper. ~

[Morrell] would give me $1500 for editorial or other contributions, leaving me free to other business and live where I liked or he would give me $3500 to edit the "Albion." If the paper prospered, as he thought it would, he would add $500 to either offer at the close of the year. All this was very handsome and fair, and astonished me very much as it will you. Here, at all events, are bread and cheese, a living for my family, and an honourable and influential position independent of local politics or of friends over the sea. If nothing better turns up we are thus provided for and have two months to look round us, if anything better is on the cards. If they give me anything I can make up $1500 by light labour and get my salary besides. If they give me nothing we can live here in our usual quiet way and put by

$1000 to pay our debts every year, leaving our assets in Nova Scotia undiminished. For this new and unexpected mercy I fervently thank God. It makes me feel more independent of all chances and casualties than I have done for many a day.

(Howe to Mrs. Howe, January, 15, 1866, *Howe Letters*, pp. 186-87)

~ Writing from Washington in March, 1866, Howe described himself as "lonely, weary, vexed." Should he consider only his own interest or do his duty to Nova Scotia? ~

I am pressed by Morrell to go to New York and accept the Chair (editor's) on 31st. I am much inclined to accept – half inclined to throw up everything, come home, and fight the battle of my own country in the dark hours that I see are closing round her. That would be the right thing to do but we have had so much thankless care and labour that I, for the first time in my life, hesitate between duty and interest. Poor old Nova Scotia, God help her, beset with marauders outside and enemies within, she has a hard time of it, and my mouth closed and my pen silent.

(Letter from Washington, March 12, 1866, *George Johnson Papers*)

~ In a matter of days Howe was back in Halifax "fighting the battles of Nova Scotia." His proposition, he said, was very simple, to let well enough alone. ~

The Constitution of Nova Scotia has grown out of its character and circumstances, and a more prosperous, self-governed and happy country is not to be found within the Empire or beyond it. My advice to you is, to let well alone, at all events until assured that peace is to be preserved. . . .

But we are told that a majority either has been or will be combined to perpetrate this outrage. I do not believe it. Nobody better understands the nature and extent of the influence which will be brought to bear, but I pray seriously that there may be found, even in the present House of Assembly, firmness and virtue sufficient to resist them. If not, the people will even then have some power of self-protection. When satisfied that they are to be over-powered, the minority can send an indignant protest to the foot of the Throne, retire to their homes, and leave the majority to complete the work without the sanction of their presence.

The people should then prepare to fight the battle in England. Every county should petition the Imperial Parliament to stay

proceedings till the question has been decided at the Hustings. The people should choose their own Delegates. The other Provinces should be asked to co-operate, and through the Press, and at the Bar of the Lords and Commons, the question should be ventilated until it is thoroughly understood. I have yet to learn that the high-spirited and liberty-loving noblemen and gentlemen of the Mother Country will break down four free Parliaments in defiance of public opinion.

(Letter to the People of Nova Scotia, *Morning Chronicle*, April 10, 1866)

~ Howe was wrong, for the Nova Scotian Assembly quickly put its *imprimatur* on union. He immediately warned of the disastrous consequences to follow. ~

Thirty-one gentlemen have affirmed their right to annex this Province to Canada, without your counsel or consent. . . . The die is cast . . . your fate is sealed, so far as these gentlemen can seal it. For my part I shall sleep all the sounder, that before this act was done my protest against it was on record. . . .

It is not enough that we swear allegiance to the same Sovereign, and live under the same flag; we must take 80 cents a head for our revenues, and permit [Canada] to appoint our Governors, Councillors, and Judges. . . . And all this is to be done, not in a manly way, by conquest, but by a wretched intrigue, and without the people who are to be thus despoiled having a voice in the future fate and fortunes of their country. Will this act, thus consummated, be blessed of Heaven? I do not believe it. . . . These Maritime Provinces, more essential than Gibraltar to the consolidation of British power and security upon the sea, must follow the fortunes of Canada, which has not a ship to protect them, or a soldier to spare, and may find themselves swung out of the Empire some fine day as they are being swung into Confederation, without their own consent.

(Letter to the People of Nova Scotia, *Morning Chronicle*, April 19, 1866)

~ Howe next proceeded on a successful six weeks' speaking tour through western Nova Scotia. On his return to Halifax he justified himself to Isaac Buchanan of Canada. ~

I have just returned from a six weeks' ramble through our western counties, eight in number, and could not find five hundred confederates on the whole tour. . . .

You seem to mistake altogether the grounds on which I have

taken the field. Though I have never proposed any scheme of union, I have no invincible objection to becoming a unionist provided anybody will show me a scheme which does not sacrifice the interests of the Maritime Provinces. The Quebec scheme does sacrifice them completely, and the reference to a committee in England is not only an unconstitutional waiver of the rights and responsibilities of the Legislature but a leap in the dark besides. The people of Nova Scotia for 108 years had their own Parliament, and responsible government for twenty-five. I hold that to deprive them of these rights by an arbitrary Act of Parliament, passed at the instigation of the Canadians, who have never invested a pound of capital in our country, would be an atrocious proceeding, out of which would grow undying hatreds and ultimate annexation. If an honest, practicable scheme of union can be arranged, let it be printed, perfect in all its parts (which the Quebec scheme is not), and, when it has been aired in all the Provinces, let the people accept or reject it. If they voluntarily abandon their institutions, they will sincerely support the union. If tricked and bullied out of what they highly value, they will never be content.

(Howe to Buchanan, June 20, 1866; or Chisholm, II, 463-64)

~ In July, 1866, Howe headed a Nova Scotian delegation to England which was to oppose the implementation of the union. Over the next ten months he interviewed or addressed letters to every public man in the United Kingdom who might conceivably have assisted his cause. In September, 1866, he outlined Nova Scotia's case in a pamphlet entitled *Confederation Considered in Relation to the Interests of the Empire.* ~

From all [the religious and racial] complications and difficulties [of Canada] the Maritime Provinces are now free, and surely they may be pardoned if they have no desire to be mixed up with them. . . . They naturally desire to preserve the great privileges they enjoy, and to develop their resources without being involved in entanglements difficult to unravel, and from which, when once enthralled, there may be no easy means of escape. . . .

Let us see what these Canadians desire to do. They are not, as we have shown, a very harmonious or homogeneous community. Two-fifths of the population are French and three-fifths are English. They are therefore perplexed with an internal

antagonism which was fatal to the unity of Belgium and Holland, and which, unless the fusion of races becomes rapid and complete, must ever be a source of weakness. They are shut in by frost from the outer world for five months of the year. They are at the mercy of a powerful neighbour whose population already outnumbers them by more than eight to one, and who a quarter of a century hence will probably present sixty-eight millions to six millions on the opposite side of a naturally defenceless frontier. Surely such conditions as these ought to repress inordinate ambition or lust of territory on the part of the public men of Canada. The wisdom of Solomon and the energy and strategy of Frederick the Great would seem to be required to preserve and strengthen such a people, if formed, as it appears they desire to form themselves, into "a new nationality.". . . A more unpromising nucleus of a new nation can hardly be found on the face of the earth. . . .

Turning to the equally absurd proposition, that Canada should be aided by a British guarantee to enable her to purchase and govern the Hudson's Bay territory, and that she should be permitted to extend her authority over the organized Provinces on the Pacific, with power to assume their revenues, appoint their governors, judges and senators, and tax them internally and externally, the idea is simply preposterous and absurd . . . yet, strange to say, the Canadian proposition, in gross ignorance of its monstrosity or in utter indifference to the subject was received with general favour. . . .

There were in [Britain] two or three classes of persons prepared to receive this proposition with special favour. There were first the anti-colonial school of politicians, who desire to pollard the British oak – who believe that England would be richer, stronger, happier, if all her outlying provinces were given away. . . . These people thought that confederation meant separation, and were disposed, like Moore's French Cupid, "to plot us off and then bid us good-bye.". . .

Unfortunately there is [another] class of persons in England . . . who, painfully interested in the throes and eccentricities of Canada, are too much inclined to favour anything which may be calculated to restore her to financial soundness and give buoyancy to stocks fearfully depreciated. Meetings are annually held in London, at which a body of very worthy persons, who have invested £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 in certain enterprises connected with Canada, debate for a whole afternoon the very

interesting question of how they can get their money back again . . . despairing of relief from other quarters, it is sometimes assumed that if the productive revenues of the Maritime Provinces could be flung into the empty treasury of Canada, in which, for ten years, there has been but one surplus, and that if the British Government would throw three or four millions into the country, for any object and at anybody's expense, their prospect of dividends might be improved . . . [these persons] would gladly make the Maritime Provinces, that have had nothing to do with their disappointments and their sufferings, pay the penalty of their own want of strength. But this would be most unfair. Those Provinces have honestly borrowed, on the credit of their public works. They pay the interest promptly every half-year, and just as fast as capital accumulates, seeking permanent investment, their bonds are purchased by their own people. . . .

Instead of wasting precious time with schemes to dismember the empire, I wish the Government and people of England would seriously consider how it can be organized so as to draw around the throne its vast intellectual and physical resources, and lift us above the atmosphere of doubt and apprehension in which, in these latter days, it appears we live.

(Chisholm, II, 471-92)

~ Privately Howe expressed his indignation that the British government would risk dismemberment of the Empire by pressing an ill-conceived union solely to cut down its commitments for North American defence and hence reduce the chance of its own involvement with the forces of the United States. ~

I am a dear lover of old England, and to save her would blow Nova Scotia into the air or scuttle her like an old Ship. But when driven out of the Empire, absolved from my allegiance, and told that the Mother Country will run no risk to maintain old relations, how can it be supposed that when a peaceful frontier and full fraternity with a great British community who have an Army & Navy and are afraid of nobody, are offered to me that I would be such an idiot as to embark in this crazy Confederacy with a mongrel crew half French and English and certain to be sent to the bottom at the first broadside. With an enormous amount of shipping at sea Nova Scotia must belong to a great Naval Power. When England throws her off her destiny is inevitable, and nobody with the eye of a Statesman in his head can suppose that she will choose Ottawa for a capital.When she

has lost London, and can have New York, no further off than Ottawa, or that with the Arsenals and Dock Yards of Boston and Portsmouth at her very doors, she will commit the care of her commerce to the Canadians who have but one paltry Steamer in the Gulf in Summer and are frozen up for half the year. We go in for "the Empire one and indivisible" but when the old ship is broken up, we are not such fools as to trust our lives in a crazy craft in which we are certain to be drowned.

(Howe to Sir John C. D. Hay, private, November 12, 1866, *Howe Papers*, IX, 205-8)

~ While Howe's immense effort was unavailing in preventing the passage of the British North America Act, he was at least consoled by the feeling that he had done his duty. ~

I wish [the news] was more cheery. As you may suppose the last fortnight has been one of anxiety and vexation, but, through it all, I have been cheered with the consciousness that I have done my duty to my country and to yours and to my father's principles and memory and a thousand times happier than I was at Washington or at home last spring before I had decided on my course. I can now live among my own countrymen and enjoy their respect or lie down beside my father in the Churchyard. Do not fret about my disappointment. I never could have been happy had I not fought the battle through, and when it is over will face the future with a light heart.

(Howe to Mrs. Howe, March 2, 1867, *George Johnson Papers*)

~ To William J. Stairs, the Vice-President of the Anti-Confederation League, Howe confessed his disillusionment with British public men. ~

I am not surprised at the indignation felt by our friends at the utter indifference shown in Parliament to our interests or our remonstrances. The fact is, they think here only of themselves, and having made up their minds that the Provinces are a source of peril and expense to them – the prevailing idea is to set them adrift, to gradually withdraw British troops from them – to have no quarrel with the United States on account of them, and to leave them to defend themselves if they can, or to pass into the Union if they prefer that solution of their difficulties. Of course we are powerless to do any thing but to punish if we can the rascals who have sold the country.

(Howe to Stairs, March 29, 1867, *Howe Papers*, XXVIa, 238-39)

~ Stairs told Howe that he could not be expected to sacrifice himself further, but from London Howe replied that he was "hardly at liberty to desert [his friends] now, at the very crisis of affairs, and when some guidance may be required." On his return to Nova Scotia in May, 1867, he embarked almost immediately upon another campaign of speech-making. Three points stood out in these speeches. First, there was his evident disillusionment with the British political process which he had always conceived in highly idealistic terms. This was well brought out in his speech at Temperance Hall in Halifax on May 24. ~

There are about 450 peers of the realm. When this [Confederation] measure was to be considered there were never on any one night fifty of them in their places. There were about fifty when Lord Carnarvon opened the discussion, and half of those present went away at the close of his speech. When the question was taken on the first and second readings there were not more than twenty-five present, and on the third reading the members had dwindled away until there were but ten lords in their places. If disloyal men can be made at all it is by such treatment as that; and I never felt so disloyal as I did when I looked at that august body treating thus indifferently a measure they should have most carefully considered. . . . The debate in that House . . . would not have done credit to a college union or a common debating society . . . [as for the House of Commons] there was not a night that I went there and heard the discussion that I did not feel degraded in my own estimation. If they had let in those sixteen men from the colonies, bad as I think of them, they would have illustrated the subject with an amount of information far superior to that displayed by the ministers who had the matter in hand. But look at the treatment of the measure in that House. The first thing that caught my attention in the report of the debate was an old gentleman of whom I had never heard, rising and saying, "Why this haste about such a measure". . . . I never knew, in the history of parliamentary legislation a measure of such length driven through both Houses as that was. It was done for two reasons; the government wanted to gain time for the reform bill, and there was nothing for the Houses to do, so that they were glad to push on this bill to give the appearance of doing something. Another reason was that the delegates knew that if they let it hang fire till May it was gone. By law our parliament here is dissolved in May, and they knew

they could never get the sanction of a new House; . . . the manner in which this measure was treated was a disgrace to both Houses of Parliament. . . . If a hard and sad and bitter feeling pervades the population of the Maritime Provinces it will not be my fault, but the fault of those who should have treated us differently. If there ever was a question which should have challenged the exhaustive attention of Lords and Commons it was this. Here was a revolution in the constitution which the country had enjoyed for a hundred years – a new system of government was to be established for five Provinces, and the leading minds in both Houses should have taken that bill and spent days and nights over it to make it what it should be, provided the general principle were approved of. Such men as Gladstone, and Mill, and other leading minds should have given it their most earnest attention, but the only man who did so was John Bright. . . . There was hardly another speech made on the subject that was worth listening to. There was nothing to complain of in Lord Carnarvon's speech – he did his spiriting gently; he put me in mind of the man in the farce who says: "I'll kill you like a gentleman, you shall die without a groan." Nor do I complain of the style and manner of the late Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cardwell; but I do complain that we had not the benefits of the counsel, experience and criticism of the able men of both Houses. If the measure had to lie over for a year and to come back to us with suggestions for improvements, what harm? But they denied this to us, and hurried it through in a way that was positively indecent.

(*Morning Chronicle*, May 29, 1867)

~Secondly, Howe deplored the loss of Nova Scotian independence, as illustrated by his speech at Dartmouth on May 22. ~

A year ago Nova Scotia presented the aspect of a self-governed community, loyal to a man, attached to their institutions, cheerful, prosperous and contented. . . . Now all this has been changed. We have been entrapped into a revolution. You look into each other's faces and ask, what is to come next? You grasp each other's hands as though in the presence of sudden danger. You are a self-governed and independent community no longer. . . .

The old men who sit around me, and the men of middle age who hear my voice, know that thirty years ago we engaged in a series of struggles which the growth of population, wealth and

intelligence rendered inevitable. For what did we contend? Chiefly for the right of self-government. We won it from Downing Street after many a manly struggle, and we exercised and never abused it for a quarter of a century. Where is it now? Gone from us, and certain persons in Canada are now to exercise over us powers more arbitrary and excessive than those the Colonial Secretaries ever claimed. . . .

But it is said, why should we complain? we are still to manage our local affairs. I have shown you that self-government in all that gives dignity and security to a free State, is to be swept away. The Canadians are to appoint our Governors, Judges, and Senators. They are to "tax us by any and every mode" and spend the money. They are to regulate our trade, control our Post Offices, command the militia, fix the salaries, do what they like with our shipping and navigation, with our seacoast and river fisheries, regulate the currency and the rate of interest, and seize upon our Savings Banks. What remains? Listen and be comforted. You are to have the privilege of "imposing direct taxation within the Province, in order to the raising of revenue for Provincial purposes." Why do you not go down on your knees and be thankful for this crowning mercy . . . when fifty per cent has been added to your *ad valorem* duties, and the money has been all swept away to dig Canals or fortify Montreal.

(*Morning Chronicle*, May 27, 1867; or Chisholm, II, 509-13)

~ Thirdly, Howe called upon the electorate to inflict a crushing defeat upon the thirty-two "traitorous" assemblymen who had sold Nova Scotia into Confederation. This, he told audiences in Halifax on May 9 and 24, would demonstrate to the British government the true state of public opinion in the province. ~

Our first duty is to rescue our country from the control of the men who have betrayed us. One thinks of them in the same connection with Cataline's Confederates – with the Cato Street conspirators, or with Arnold who tried to sell West Point to the enemy. [Some are asking the people to elect them.] Why, Judas Iscariot did not ask to be folded to his Master's bosom, after he had betrayed Him. . . .

You have but to stand together, to prove that the Delegates you sent to England, spoke the truth, to punish the men who have betrayed you, and to place your great interests in the hands of persons upon whom you can rely. . . . Our language to the

Canadians should be this: we never liked this scheme; we did our best to oppose it; we have punished the traitors who betrayed us; we are now prepared to face the future, and endeavour to work out some rational scheme of government, provided you treat us with justice and magnanimity. This is my advice to you. The lines of duty are clear and well defined, but grovel at the feet of the men who have sold and betrayed you and even the Canadians will treat you with sovereign contempt.

(*Morning Chronicle*, May 15, 1867)

Nova Scotians have to vindicate themselves to the Imperial Government and Parliament and even to the Canadians too. . . . The *game of brag* [played by Tupper] has lasted long enough. The game we are playing now cannot be won without trumps. We have the trumps and will win the game from one end of Nova Scotia to the other. The nine of diamonds has been always called the curse of Scotland. I wish there was a card with thirty two black spots upon it, because when kings and countries are sold the act should be commemorated. Then every time a man took up a pack of cards he would remember the thirty-two, who are slinking into holes and corners ashamed of themselves and unwilling to face the indignant people whose petitions they derided. . . .

I have no hesitation in saying that if it were not for my respect for the British flag and my allegiance to my Sovereign; if the British forces were withdrawn from the country, and this issue was left to be tried out between the Canadians and ourselves, I would take every son I have and die on the frontier, before I would submit to this outrage. . . . We will, however, do our duty like men and Nova Scotians; we will retain that title still; we will wear the Mayflower in our button holes, and look after the interests of Nova Scotia. . . .

How long we will bear [the new régime] is not the question now. Point the first is to thrash the thirty-two scamps who betrayed us. . . .

If it can be shown that not a man of these thirty-two has been elected by the people of Nova Scotia, I do not say that we might not get clear of this scrape yet. If any fact would open the eyes of the people of England, that would. And now, let me say, I do not promise that it can be done, but Archimedes said if he only had a fulcrum he could move the world. Let us get a place to put our crow bar, lay the stones solid and deep, putting those

thirty-two rascals under them, and then we will see what can be done next.

(*Morning Chronicle*, May 29, 1867)

~ Howe's confidence in the Nova Scotian electorate was once again vindicated on September 18. Provincially it returned 36 of 38 anti-Confederate candidates; federally 18 of 19. The anti-Confederate M.P.'s quickly made up their minds to go to Ottawa. This may have been a mistake for, in a sense, it implied the recognition of the new régime. Before Howe left Halifax he attempted to put his straitened financial affairs in order; gratefully he accepted the assistance of W. J. Stairs, the vice-president of the Anti-Confederation League. ~

I have at last got an hour or two to think of my own affairs, about which you have kindly expressed solicitude on several occasions. The matter stands thus. I took all that I could save from my Royal Commission to pay off old debts incurred in Provincial Service, but this was a great relief since it stopped a good deal of interest and relieved me from many old obligations.

Before the Commission expired I had . . . formed an honourable connexion which would have maintained my family. I was forced to abandon this by other duties, which have occupied my time incessantly for 18 months. During that time we have lived out of old savings of one kind or another. As there is nothing certain in the future, and as I must go to Canada in a few days I want to pay a few debts and make some arrangements before leaving home. If you can discount the note enclosed, it will be the best thing you can do for me just now. I hope, when the wheel of better fortune comes around again to be able to repay all obligations except those of friendship which I trust between us will never be effaced.

(Howe to Stairs, October 19, 1867, *Howe Papers*, IX, 402-6)

~ Howe participated actively in the first session of the first Dominion Parliament. Then, in January, 1868, he headed a delegation to England to secure the repeal of the British North America Act. Prior to his leaving, he revealed his feelings in a letter to a friend, and in a public address in Halifax on January 13. ~

What alarms me is the utter indifference displayed by both Houses, underlying which I suspect is fear of the United States and the desire to shake themselves clear of all responsibility in respect of the future of British America. . . .

My own position as you clearly apprehend, is trying and difficult enough. I have been all my life a loyal and devoted British subject. Up to this hour I have done no act and uttered no sentiment unconsistent [sic] with this character.

I shall maintain that attitude and endeavour to keep our people within legal and constitutional bounds till a final appeal for redress is made to England. When that fails, as I fear it will, two or three courses are open to me. 1st. To leave this country which I probably will. 2. To become a Canadian and work the system to its logical termination actual independence or, 3. Drift on with what I fear will be the strong current of feeling in all the Maritime Provinces, and shake off Canada Domination by force. Neither of these alternatives presents a pleasant method for a true Englishman by birth and sentiment, but just now I see no other.

(Howe to Musgrave of Aylesford, January 11, 1868, *Howe Papers*, XXXVII)

[Would the delegation be successful?] . . . two years ago I would have sworn that they would give us redress, I believed that the throne of England sat above the fountain of honour and of justice, that the House of Lords would do justice though the heavens should fall, that a man with a manly, honest case could go to the bar of the House of Commons and obtain fair play from the independent English gentlemen who sit there, but if you ask me if I feel that confidence now, I am sorry to say that I do not. . . . If there had been a railway company asking to destroy two pear trees on the estate of one of these noblemen, there would have been a committee of Parliament or a Royal Commission appointed, but here were 350,000 of Her Majesty's subjects, with all the property and rights which they had earned and owned and lived for at stake, and only 30 or 40 out of a house of 480 could be got down to hear the case. . . .

[Howe congratulated Nova Scotia on the peacefulness of the election.] There was not a head broken, not a pane of glass broken, not an outrage committed, no police were required to keep the peace at the hustings and no charges of cavalry took place in our streets . . . my advice is to maintain peace and order as of old. . . .

[Suppose that the answer is unfavourable] . . . that Nova Scotia will submit year after to be taxed *ad libitum* by this Dominion Parliament, and will send men up to be outvoted and

laughed at, I do not imagine. . . . No man can be more weary of this life of turmoil than I, and why should I not be weary of it? For eighteen months I have hardly thought my own thoughts or been able to attend to my family duties. You remember that a British Admiral Collingwood, I think, was for years afloat in the Mediterranean. He was wearied to death, and pined and longed for the hours of rest and peace in the bosom of his home; so I pine and long, but until these dark clouds pass away none of us can do more than hold our ground, and as the cry comes up, "watchman, what of the night?" our answer must show that we are at our posts till we can reply that "all is well."

(*Morning Chronicle*, January 17, 1868; or Chisholm, II, 529-33)

~ Another frenzied round of activities followed in Britain. On John Bright's advice the delegation limited itself to requesting a royal commission to investigate Nova Scotia's grievances. But only eighty-seven members of the House of Commons voted for an inquiry, and the delegates had to be satisfied with the Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, requesting the Canadian government to review its trade, fishery and taxation policies with a view to modifying any provisions which prejudiced the peculiar interests of Nova Scotia. At this juncture Howe reviewed the alternatives which were open to the anti-Confederates. ~

1. We may confess to final defeat, – lay down our arms, and accept the best terms we can get from the Canadians. . . . But I have an invincible objection to this capitulation. . . .

2. The Executive Council might resign, and as the Governor could not, if our friends stuck together form another, a sensation might be created by the deadlock and confusion. This would be a very hazardous line to take as our own people would suffer by the public business not being done. You could not stop the supplies as you have no revenue laws under your control, and you might split the party and play into the hands of your enemies.

3. We may commence a course of passive resistance, refusing to train or pay duties, and to these alternatives we may be ultimately driven, but they are hazardous, and if they led to collisions before our people were prepared by close organization and other preparatives would easily be put down and make our cause ridiculous.

4. Open insurrection or intrigues with Foreign Countries I

put aside . . . this should not be done till all lawful modes of proceedure [sic] are exhausted, and until we have laid the grounds of reasonable hopes of success.

5. Now there is another mode of proceedure [sic], which if our people can keep their spirits up and their ranks unbroken for six months longer appears to me, after long and anxious thought, to offer the best chance of a solution to our difficulties.

Last year we had no Party in England. Now though beaten two to one in a House of Commons which is about to expire, 87 men have voted that we have a just cause, and nearly all the leading Daily Papers and many of the weeklies have espoused it. The minority includes Mill, Hughes, Fawcett, Aytoun, and many of the leading Scotch and Irish members. Lord Amberley, Earl Russell's son voted for us, and Bright's name on both continents is a tower of strength. It is safe to assume that millions of people will hear for the first time of the grievances of Nova Scotia when they read his speech of Monday last.

If our people can maintain their organization, and with unbroken spirit, and with the sympathy and assistance of their neighbours in the other Provinces, can come before a reformed Parliament six months hence in which the combination between Cardwell and Adderley is broken up, and where Bright, if the Liberals win, is sure to have a seat in the Cabinet, we may yet have a reasonable chance to win the game. The general opinion here is that Bright will take the office of Colonial Minister. If so we are pretty safe to win.

(Howe to Robertson, June 20, 1868, *Howe Papers*, IX, 441-47; or Chisholm, II, 535-36)

~ An anti-Confederate convention met in Halifax early in August to consider possible courses of action; at the same time Sir John A. Macdonald and a contingent of his ministers arrived on the scene to work out the accommodation suggested by the Colonial Secretary. In the end the convention reached no conclusions. At one point Howe suggested that the Executive Council might resign to offer convincing proof that none but anti-Confederates could conduct the government. Later the members of the Executive Council questioned the seriousness of the proposal. Howe soon became convinced that the provincial ministers were concerned mainly with staying in office, and were bent upon worsening the already bad relations with Ottawa as a means to that end. A steady increase in sentiment favouring

violence and even annexation appalled him. Finally, when a Washington correspondent of the *Eastern Chronicle* who signed himself "Acadia" advised Nova Scotians to resist the Act of Union and to "cut away from the apron-strings of the old Mother the Queen," he could restrain himself no longer. ~

I have given two years to the battle for a repeal of the British American Act, at what personal sacrifice, perhaps, only I and my own family know. It has rarely fallen to the lot of any man to confront so formidable a combination. Arrayed against us were the Queen's name, the Houses of Lords and Commons, the Governor-General, three Lieutenant-Governors, thirty-five delegates, including many of the ablest men in British America, the Canadian Press, and, until recently, nearly the entire Press of Engand. . . . During those two years [I exerted] every faculty with which nature had endowed me, to recover the independence of my native Province. . . .

[I might honourably have laid down my arms and] accepted the situation, but I am still labouring in the interests of my country, and utterly regardless of my own, to make the best of a bad business, and recover what I can out of the wreck that has been made of our Provincial organization. . . .

Were we to take ["Acadia's"] advice, that which is our greatest glory, would become our greatest danger. We have a noble fleet of ships at sea. In one week after we had defied "our old mother, the Queen," the telegraph would have flashed the news all over the world, and they would be at her mercy. Are we prepared to lose them? Are we prepared to bring them home, stow them into our harbours, and proclaim an embargo? But if we did, of fifty open harbours, but one is fortified, and that is in possession of the Crown. Every other is undefended, and might, as Pictou could, be hermetically sealed by a single gun-boat till the war was over. Let us hear no more, then, of fanciful projects and impossible remedies, whether they come from imprudent people in our midst, or good natured friends beyond the borders. Nova Scotians have established some reputation for common sense; let us exert it, attempting only the possible.

(Letter of October 24, 1868, *Novascotian*, November 2, 1868; or Chisholm, II, 544-46)

~ During Macdonald's visit to Halifax he made arrangements to exchange letters with Howe, indicating how far he would be prepared to go in effecting a rapprochement. Although Howe

offered to show the correspondence (which began in September) to the leading anti-Confederates, many of them distrusted the exchange of ideas as a "sell-out" of the repeal movement. For the moment cooler heads prevented the threatened schism from coming into the open. But when Judge Marshall finally attacked the conduct of Howe in the *Morning Chronicle*, the latter used the opportunity to defend himself in letters dated November 6, 9, 16, 23 and 27. ~

I used to believe that, in a case involving vested interests, constitutional principles, and great sums of money, British statesmen and legislators would do justice, though the Heavens should fall. As I strolled home [after the debate in the British House of Commons on Nova Scotian affairs], with deep sorrow, and a sense of humiliation not easily described, I was compelled to acknowledge that I had cherished a delusion. Anybody else may try a third experiment, and they shall have all the honour and glory if they succeed; but I have too much respect for myself, and for my country, to go a third time begging for justice where it is not to be obtained. . . .

There is one thing that never has been explained, but it is time the country knew it. On the second day that the Convention met [in August], and after my explanations had been made, this question was put by a member for whom I have a very high personal respect, "But cannot Mr. Howe tell us what we can now do?" As nearly as I can remember, my answer was – "There are two things. You can declare your independence; but if that is to be done (and I do not advise it) come up to the table here, and sign a declaration, pledging your lives, your fortunes and your sacred honour to maintain it. If the people respond be prepared to head them, and history will record your martyrdom, if not your achievements." Nobody seemed inclined to try this experiment, and I then said, "there is one other thing that neither involves your lives nor your allegiance. It is clear to me that unless something is *done* on this side of the water besides talking and passing resolutions, you can make no change on the other. But if you wish to startle England and Canada, and play your last peaceful card before you negotiate, let the Executive Council go up to General Doyle to-morrow and say, "From no disrespect to your Excellency – for we all respect you, – from no desire to embarrass, for under other circumstances we would rather assist you; but in order to give the most emphatic answer

to the Duke of Buckingham's despatch and speech, and to show the unanimity and strength of public feeling in favour of Repeal, we come to tender our resignations, and to inform your Excellency that we will not work for or under you so long as you hold a commission from Lord Monck, and not from the Queen." In offering this suggestion I pledged myself that, if it were adopted, I and every member of the House of Commons that I could influence, would back the Council, resign our seats if there was a dissolution, and pile up such a majority as could not be misrepresented in England.

When this proposal was made I looked along the treasury bench with some curiosity and interest. Not a man rose to second it, or to give to Nova Scotia her last chance of a peaceful and loyal repeal of the Union. From that moment I have taken no part in repeal movements in which I have no faith.

(*Morning Chronicle*, November 7, 1868; or Chisholm, II, 549-52)

Sad and savage enough was I on those few days that the Convention sat, and all the more so because I saw in certain quarters but little determination to submit with dignity, or to act with vigour.

My first proposition was made to rebuke a spirit then rife in some circles, and which I afterwards gathered, from the Attorney-General's speech, descended from an elevated region. For weeks before the Convention met there were threats of open resistance to the law, and proposals to insult the Canadians. Revenue offices were to be seized, and supreme power asserted, in some mode that nobody could clearly understand. In a few weeks this style of teaching would produce its natural results – riots, collisions, bloodshed. I had thought over all these modes of dealing with our difficulties time and again. My reason condemned them, and I was determined that, if lives were to be lost and property wasted, those who favoured such movements *should take the lead.* I cannot remember the exact language, perhaps, in which the case was put, but the substance of what was said was this – "do not instigate what you are afraid to share; if heads are to be broken or lives lost, risk your own." From the moment that my first proposition was suggested, those movements were postponed *sine die.*

(*Morning Chronicle*, November 24, 1868; or Chisholm, II, 561-62)

~ By the time Howe returned from England, he knew that repeal had little or no chance of success; by the autumn he

knew that the cause was hopeless. The other Maritime Provinces had shown no interest in reviving Maritime union as an alternative to the existing federation. Also, even if the Liberals upset the Tory adminisration in Britain, the prime minister would be Gladstone who had twice voted against Nova Scotia. Yet Howe was determined to maintain an independent position until the party holding office in Britain after the election declared its policy. His correspondence with Sir John Macdonald reveals his thinking at this juncture. ~

Whether it be that the British Ministers yield to the representations of the Governor General and to the paramount influence of Canada, or sincerely believe that the interests of the Empire are in some mysterious way which I cannot discover, bound up with this Confederation; or whether, as I shrewdly suspect, the men who represent the Railway and Financial interests to be affected by this measure dominate and control both Houses, I apprehend that, unless some marvellous change is wrought by the new constituencies, we shall have as little chance of obtaining justice from the new Parliament as we had from the last. . . .

A new House of Commons may take a more enlightened view of the subject, but Mr. Gladstone, who will be the leader, if the Liberals win, has twice spoken and voted against us. As matters stand, then, we have not a very cheerful outlook. . . . I have, for months, set my face steadily against revolutionary movements, annexation, intrigues, or open resistance to the law; but I will not disguise from you, that it may be very difficult to stem the tide of public opinion that a rejection of enquiry by a new Parliament may set in motion, unless, in the meantime, some large and substantial measure of reparation and justice is offered by the Government of the Dominion. . . .

I have shown your letter to a few judicious friends here, and shall show it to others, including of course the members of the House of Commons, as they come up to town, and I intend to make no secret of the fact that such a correspondence is going on. I am asked every day if I have taken office, or "accepted the situation" as the phrase goes. My answer is that I have accepted nothing but recognizing the obligation imposed by the Imperial upon the Canadian Government, I mean to discuss the whole subject with them in a frank and earnest manner. Some of my friends here are apprehensive that the fact of such a correspondence going on will weaken their chances of getting Repeal

from the new House of Commons. If I thought so I would break it off tomorrow. . . .

I note what you say in reference to my taking office, and to the example of O'Connell. My position is certainly not a very profitable or a very enviable one but I prefer to hold it just now. I have been driven into it by a sense of duty and by the force of circumstances which I could not control. The responsibilities resting upon me are not light, and I can only relieve myself of them by maintaining for the present, a position of personal independence.

(Howe to Macdonald, October 21, 1868, *Howe Papers*, IX, 557-65)

I should deceive myself and you too if I allowed you to suppose that I could lead them [the anti-Confederate leaders] as I like. As a whole they are intelligent, keen politicians, and deeply feel what they regard as great wrongs. They have besides got the idea into their heads, that your government is not to be trusted and that you are a sort of Wizard that having already beguiled Brown, McDougall, Tupper etc. to destruction, are about to do the same kind office for me. The independence of my position alone enables me to fight this battle and I must hold it or be beaten. It is true that I might take office and carry my county with me, but I would not at present carry the country. . . .

At present there is in many quarters hope from the new Parliament, but the wide spread feeling in favour of Annexation to the United States now complicates matters a great deal. You can have no idea how rapidly this feeling has developed. There are whole districts where the sentiment of loyalty is dead, where no "enthusiasm" can be evoked by anybody.

Mirabeau was an able man but unprincipled and as ugly as the devil, and besides the French Court having no sincere desire to make just concessions was not worth saving. They played with a Revolution and lost time till it was too late to save the nation. You have lost some time. Had we been met at Ottawa last winter in the same spirit which you evince now things might have taken a different turn. But the past is behind us and cannot be recalled. Looking to the future I must fight my battle here in my own way, and it will be sound policy for you to allay the discontent so far as you honourably can. . . .

(Howe to Macdonald, confidential, November 16, 1868, *Howe Papers*, IX, 623-66)

4. "ACCEPTING THE SITUATION"

~ In December, 1868, Gladstone assumed office in England, and Howe appreciated at once that he would not order even an inquiry into Nova Scotia's ills. In reply to a question in King's County on December 18 Howe revealed publicly for the first time that he had accepted the situation. ~

When David's son lay sick, the great King fasted, and wrestled, and prayed for his recovery. When all hope was gone, and the child lay dead before him, he did not waste his life in vain hopes for his restoration, or in unavailing sorrow. He bowed to the will of Providence, and "accepted the situation." While there was a rational hope . . . of obtaining a repeal of the B.N.A. Act, I struggled for two years to repeal it, straining every faculty of my soul and intellect to accomplish that end. But I cannot work miracles, and am not such a fool as to deceive my countrymen, or pretend that I can. With infinite sorrow and mortification at the vain result of all our labours, I bow to [the] will of Providence, as David did. I do not do this willingly or cheerfully; but I cannot inspire hopes which I do not feel, nor waste life in efforts that I believe will be fruitless. People everywhere, and in all situations, have to bow to the inevitable. When wives run away or friends die, can we call them back? If a ship is wrecked, a house burnt, or a crop destroyed, can we restore either? All that can be done is to "accept the situation," repair the mischief, and make the best of a bad business. This is common sense, based on the universal practice and experience of mankind. . . . I will not conceal from you, that every day that passes, adds to the complications and difficulties to be encountered by those who hope against hope. Within the past year, five thousand one hundred Nova Scotians have practically "accepted the situation," by receiving the bounty, and drilling as volunteers under the new system; while in Mr. Gladstone's new Cabinet, just formed, there are fourteen noblemen and gentlemen, pledged by their public actions or opinions, to maintain the Union. Out of fifteen, we have but one friend, and he generous and able as he is, pledged to enquiry, but not to repeal.

(*British Colonist*, December 31, 1868)

~ Howe and his colleague, A. W. McLelan, entered into negotiations with Sir John Rose, the Dominion Minister of Finance, from which the "better-terms" agreement of 1869 emerged. On

this basis Howe entered the federal cabinet as President of the Council on January 30, 1869. He immediately defended his conduct in a Letter to the Electors of Hants. ~

In August last the Premier [Sir John Macdonald] offered me a seat in the Cabinet. The offer was renewed, and pressed upon me again in October. But I felt that it would be time enough to think of honours and emoluments for myself when I had tested the sincerity of his professions to do justice to my country, within the scope and boundary of her acknowledged powers of action. He did do justice . . . and then Sir John A. Macdonald, with some show of reason, pressed me again to take office. He said, we have now done justice so far as we could in monetary matters, and are prepared to deal with Nova Scotia in all other Branches of the Public Service, as rapidly as we get the power; but I want your advice and assistance in order that this may be effectually done; and, what is more, I want some guarantee to give to Parliament that, when they have voted this money, the arrangement will not be repudiated by Nova Scotia.

I felt the fairness of this argument. Our American trade was of deep importance to our people: should I hesitate to aid the Government in its recovery? The Intercolonial Railway is to be constructed. Nova Scotians, who might tender, should be protected. In all Departments there was influence and patronage to be exercised and dispensed, and was I not bound to see that Nova Scotia was fairly treated?

While much influenced by these considerations, I knew that a good many persons still clung to the belief that Gladstone's Government would repeal the Act, and my determination was to return home, consult my friends, and wait till the Local Government got their answer. Unexpectedly, but very opportunely, the despatch came while I was at Ottawa. . . . It is short and decisive, and gives the answer to all the nonsense written in the autumn.

I could no longer hesitate. The plain path of duty lay before me. All rational repealers had professed that the battle was to last only till the answer came from Gladstone's Cabinet. The answer was here. The battle was over.

(*Novascotian*, February 15, 1869; or Chisholm, II, 586-87)

~ During the by-election in Hants which followed Howe's acceptance of an office of emolument, he commented generally on his position in a speech at Windsor on February 13. ~

I do not hesitate to say that if I could have taken my country out of this Confederation, I would have done it in spite of Great Britain, but gentlemen, I had to look at this as a practical question. . . . When I am asked to meet the question: "Shall we attempt to fight the whole British Empire with 400,000?" I decided it in the only way that a man of sense can decide it – that the thing is impracticable and absurd. . . .

[His opponents had contended that he should have reported back to the party before he accepted office.] Come back to the party! I would like to know where the party was by the first of February. The party was pretty well shipwrecked a good many months ago. . . . The thing has been done at all events, and it is likely now that there will be two parties in Nova Scotia, the party having confidence in Joseph Howe, and the party willing to follow some other gentlemen who think they are all the world. . . . I believe that the party with which I shall have something to do will have a manly intelligent policy. Attempts have been made to range the people in this election on opposite sides as Unionists and Anti-Confederates. I believe all such attempts will fail. It will be my duty if I obtain power to do what is right to *all* those who support me. . . .

[His opponents had accused him of ambition.] If I have any ambition it is to get three or four years of comparative repose to enable me to put on paper my recollections of the men who have adorned the history of Nova Scotia . . . to see that as the young men grow up in this country, that I retain the respect that their fathers had for me; to see as families widen that I have not lost the confidence and affection which their elders entertained, and as from time to time I ride through the country to witness those scenes of rural happiness which have so long gladdened my mind and heart.

(*Halifax Citizen*, February 18, 1869)

~ Fighting the by-election in mid-winter against fierce opposition was too much for Howe's formerly rugged constitution. ~

The hard part [of the campaign] was to make three speeches in a cold barn of a Courthouse, and to sit for hours in an atmosphere but a few degrees warmer than that of the street. Then when the meeting was over my room at the Hotel was filled till midnight with friends, organizing and consulting, from whom I could not escape. This sort of thing went on for fifteen days. . . . The day before I broke down the meeting was held at

Welsford . . . in a Drill Shed with a ground floor, no fire and doors opening at both ends and which were hardly ever closed. To sit five hours in such a place and say nothing on a cold day would have been punishment enough, but I had to speak an hour, then sit three, and afterwards reply to Annand, Jones, etc in an atmosphere every breath of which I felt to be cutting my throat. That night I ought to have given up but we had another meeting called for the following day and I pushed on and spoke my hour. I then rolled myself up in coats and laid [sic] down on the Platform till Jones, Goudge and Morrison had exhausted themselves and then having wiped out their slates went off to a farmhouse where I lay for a week before I could get home, completely prostrated and for two or three days threatened with constipation from the effects of continued colds and chills.

(Howe to Sir John A. Macdonald, March 19, 1869, *Howe Papers*, XXXVIII)

~ Despite his inability to continue active campaigning Howe won his by-election by a convincing majority. But he never fully regained his health. His entrance into the Macdonald cabinet shattered the anti-Confederate party and necessitated the building of new combinations. More than once Howe had to defend himself for joining up with Macdonald rather than the Grit Alexander Mackenzie. ~

With scarcely an exception the Ontario Opposition were Confederates to a man. They had supported Brown and the coalition which carried the measure. They stood prepared to maintain it . . . hardly a man of them had the courage to admit that Nova Scotia had been unfairly treated. . . . They did not take us into their counsels. McKenzie took it for granted that we had no alternative but to fall in behind him. He had no sympathy to waste, no remedy to propose. Almost all our Nova Scotian members felt and resented this treatment. On personal grounds, therefore, I had no desire to join his party.

But when I had to deal with your interests, there could be no question as to the line of action to be pursued. A large majority of the members of the Cabinet were old acquaintances or personal friends, with whom it would be pleasant to act if I could, and with whom I might occasionally expect to have influence from the start. . . . Your interests lay all on one side. Nova Scotia had suffered enough. Why should I lead her into hopeless opposition, and leave her, perhaps for the next ten years,

without influence, patronage, or any reasonable chance of provision for her public works. Had I done this I should have been an idiot. But I had studied Nova Scotia's interest too long; and led and guided her too often, to make such an egregious blunder. The moment the conviction was forced upon me that she must remain in the Confederacy, I determined that, if she could not get out, she should count for something within it. And she has counted for something. With her financial grievances redressed, and her people freed from the danger of direct taxation – with her two representatives in the Cabinet, and her nineteen able men (presently to be twenty-one) on the floor of the House, Nova Scotia has occupied, for the last three years, and must continue to occupy a fine position, which may be improved or weakened just in proportion to the mental calibre of the men she selects to represent her. I am well aware that many old friends blamed me for "accepting the situation," as the phrase went, but now that everybody has accepted it, I trust it will be perceived, that in changing front, I only anticipated the inevitable in time to prepare for it, and that the new formation, when it came, was the only one by which the interests of Nova Scotia could have been protected.

(Letter to the Electors of the County of Hants, *British Colonist*, July 27, 1872)

~ On November 16, 1869, Howe became Secretary of State for the Provinces, and in that capacity he participated in the arrangements for bringing Manitoba into Confederation. A few months earlier, still determined to see things at first hand, he had taxed his ebbing strength by a trip to the Red River. Later, when William McDougall, who had been nominated as Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, was unable to enter upon his duties because of insurrection, he blamed the loose talk and anti-Canadian bias of Howe for much of his difficulty. The House of Commons accepted Howe's appraisal of the situation. ~

That [McDougall] should desire to escape from the very extraordinary position in which he has placed himself, by laying the blame on any and every body that he can with any colour of pretence, render responsible for his failure, may be natural in a man of his temperament, and that he would take this line I judged from one or two conversations I had with him since his return. . . .

If there was "Conspiracy" against the Government of Canada, in the North West, Mr. McDougall, who, from the period of his return from England, was largely trusted with the oversight of that country, and had his officers and employees in it all summer, ought to have found it out. To charge the conspiracy now upon his old friends and colleagues, whose only weakness . . . would appear to have been too great a reliance upon his foresight and discretion, is most unfair. . . .

That the absurd stories published in the "Toronto Globe," originated in the loose and unguarded utterances of Mr. McDougall, I have now little doubt. Fortunately for me Canadian gentlemen of the highest respectability accompanied me on my tour to Red River, and some of them were present at most of the conversations that were held with leading persons in the Settlements. Quite unsolicited on my part one of these persons, James Turner Esq. of Hamilton has flatly contradicted the Globe statements, in a letter published in the "Hamilton Spectator" which the "Globe" had refused to insert.

(Howe to Sir John A. Macdonald, January 22, 1870, *Howe Papers*, IX, 703-7)

~ Howe's disillusionment with British statesmen reached its zenith in the Washington Treaty of 1871. In letters to the Governor General and Sir John Rose he denounced the conduct of the British Commissioners and the British government. ~

I still think, as I have thought from the first, that the conduct of the British Commissioners and of the Imperial Government in forcing the signature of the Treaty was hasty, selfish and unfair, I might almost say pusilanimous [sic]. On this point I am afraid I can hardly change my opinion.

(Howe to Governor-General, Private, August 22, 1871, *Howe Papers*, IX, 725)

Though mortified and ashamed at the conduct of Great Britain in the matter of the Treaty I am not disappointed. I always told my colleagues that both parties in England would throw us over and buy their peace at our expense, as the Russian woman flings her children to the wolves. . . .

If by the sacrifice we could secure peace and the friendship of the United States for half a century it would be less humiliating. But when was Brother Jonathan without a grievance and a cry against England? Never within our memories, and he will have others in less than six months.

Bit by bit England gives North America away, and the feeling is becoming widespread here that the sooner we join that Branch of the British family that is not afraid of the other the better for us all.

(Howe to Sir John Rose, June 26, 1871, *Howe Papers*, XXXIX, 833-35)

~ When he repeated his criticism of the British government and British public men publicly before the Y.M.C.A. in Ottawa on February 22, 1872, the Prime Minister's displeasure knew no end. "That speech," wrote Sir John, "nearly ended in poor old Howe sending in his resignation, but although he has outlived his usefulness he has not lost his powers of mischief." ~

In no country that I have ever heard or read of, in ancient or modern times, was the strain on the mental and bodily powers of the whole population greater than it is in this Dominion. We cannot afford to have a laggard, an idler, or a coward. There are not 4,000,000 of us, all told, and we have undertaken to govern half a continent, with 40,000,000 of ambitious and aggressive people on the other side of a frontier 3,000 miles long. If each British American could multiply himself fivefold, we should not have more than half the brain power and physical force necessary to keep our rivals in check and to make our position secure. . . .

But, it may be said, are we not part and parcel of a great empire upon which the sun never sets? . . . What have we to fear when this great empire protects us? That was our ancient faith and proud boast under every trial. . . .

But of late new doctrines have been propounded in the mother country. The disorganization of the empire has been openly promulgated in leading and influential organs of public sentiment and opinion. Our brethren within the narrow seas have been counselled to adopt a narrow policy; to call home their legions, and leave the outlying Provinces without a show of sympathy or protection. . . .

I do not desire to anticipate the full and ample discussion which Parliament will give to England's recent diplomatic efforts [i.e., in negotiating the Washington Treaty] to win her own peace at the sacrifice of our interests, or of that comedy of errors into which she has blundered; but this I may say, that the time is rapidly approaching when Canadians and Englishmen must have a clear and distinct understanding as to the hopes and

obligations of the future. If imperial policy is to cover the whole ground, upon the faith of which our forefathers settled and improved, then let that be understood, and we know what to do. But if . . . 30,000,000 of Britons are to hoard their "rascal counters" within two small islands, gather round them the troops and warships of the empire, and leave 4,000,000 of Britons to face 40,000,000, and to defend a frontier of 3,000 miles, then let us know what they are at, and our future policy will be governed by that knowledge. No cabinet has yet dared to shape this thought and give it utterance. Leading newspapers have told us that our presence within the empire is a source of danger, and that the time for separation is approaching, if it has not already come. Noble lords and erudite commoners have sneeringly told us that we may go when we are inclined. As yet, neither the Crown, the Parliament, nor the people of England have deliberately avowed this policy of dismemberment, although the tendency of English thought and legislation daily deepens the conviction that the drift is all that way. We must wait, my young friends, for further developments, not without anxiety for the future, but with a firm reliance on the goodness of Providence, and our own ability to so shape the policy of our country as to protect her by our wit, should Englishmen, unmindful of the past, repudiate their national obligations.

(Chisholm, II, 638-40)

5. EPILOGUE

~ Sir John Macdonald was at length able to rid himself of Howe without harming himself in Nova Scotia. On May 10, 1873, Howe was sworn into office as Lieutenant-Governor of his native province. He was to hold that office for less than three weeks before he passed away at Government House in Halifax on June 1. A writer for the *Halifax Daily Reporter and Times* recorded an interview with him two weeks before his death. ~

About a fortnight ago the writer called at Government House, and was requested to go up and see Mr. Howe. He found the veteran, in his private room in dishabille. "There," said he, "I don't mind you. You know how much easier it is to write with everything loose about you, as a newspaper man. You are welcome at any time." Then he began to tell of the changes that had taken place in journalism since he was a journalist, and how these changes, more than anything else, warned him that he was

an old stager, soon to slip away from the footlights, and cease to act any part. The conversation then turned upon the sudden destruction which overwhelmed the crew and passengers of the *Atlantic*, Mr. Howe drawing, from the capacious stores of his memory, scenes and incidents connected with shipwrecks on the Nova Scotia coast from a very early period. Then came up, by natural and easy transition, the great question of the "after-death."

He quoted Shakespeare's famous passage in *Measure for Measure*:

> *Aye, but to die, and go we know not where:*
> *To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot!*
> *This sensible, warm motion to become*
> *A kneaded clod; and the de-lighted spirit*
> *To bathe in fiery floods; or to reside*
> *In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;*
> *To be imprisoned in the viewless winds*
> *And blown with restless violence round about*
> *The pendent world; or to be worse than worst*
> *Of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts*
> *Imagine howling! 'Tis too terrible!*
> *The weariest and most loathed worldly life*
> *That age, ache, penury and imprisonment*
> *Can lay on nature, is a paradise*
> *To what we fear of Death.*

He spoke of the word "de-lighted" in the fourth line as apt to deceive the casual reader. There should be, he said, a pause between "de" and "lighted" when read, a hyphen when printed; and the meaning was evidently "deprived of light" instead of "happy," as would be suggested on the first reading. He then said that Shakespeare had evidently a great fear of death; that that fear was natural to man, as was the fear of an old woman to enter for the first time a railway car, or the fear of a novice to descend into the depths of a coal mine. But if the right view were taken, death should not be dreaded – rather welcomed. The grub shivered and trembled. But its death was development. The gay golden-winged butterfly sprang into existence. Development was everywhere the result of death. Man was no exception. The Great Author of Life was wise and good, and having impressed the great fact of "development" upon Nature, had, by so doing, bidden man to conclude that he too was to obey

the same law. Not leaving man to find his way to a sound conclusion by the dim light of reason He had provided the blazing sun of revelation. "I often," said he, "think of that passage, the sense of which is, 'We know not what we shall be, but this we know: we shall see Him, and shall therefore be like Him'. "That is enough for me," said he.

(*Halifax Daily Reporter and Times*, June 2, 1873)

JOSEPH HOWE

CHRONOLOGY

1804	Dec. 13	Born at the North West Arm, Halifax
1827	Jan. 5	In association with James Spike purchases the *Weekly Chronicle* and publishes it as the *Acadian*
	Dec. 27	Purchases the *Novascotian* from George Young
1828	July 24	Commences "Western Rambles"; concludes the series on Oct. 9, 1828
1829	July 8	Commences "Legislative Reviews"
	Dec. 16	Commences "Eastern Rambles"; concludes the series on Aug. 4, 1831
1835	March 2-3	Tried for libelling the magistrates of Halifax
1836	Dec. 13	Declared elected as member of the Assembly for the County of Halifax
1838	April 26-Nov. 4	First trip to England
1839	Sept.	First series of letters to Lord John Russell
1840	March 14	Duel with John C. Halliburton
	Oct. 6	Becomes member of the Executive Council
	Nov. 7	Re-elected member of the Assembly for the County of Halifax
1841	Feb. 3	Becomes Speaker of the Assembly
	Dec. 30	Announces sale of *Novascotian* to Richard Nugent
1842	Sept. 7	Appointed Collector of Excise at Halifax
1843	Jan. 26	Resigns Speakership of the Assembly
	Nov. 27	Re-elected by acclamation for the County of Halifax
	Dec. 21	Tenders resignation as member of the Executive Council and Collector of Excise
1844	May	Assumes editorship of the *Novascotian* and the *Morning Chronicle*
	May 20	Publishes "The Lord of the Bed-Chamber"
1846	April	Retires from the editorship of the *Novascotian* and *Morning Chronicle*
	Oct.	Second series of letters to Lord John Russell
1847	Aug. 5	Re-elected member of the Assembly for the County of Halifax; the Reformers elect 29 members to the Tories' 22
1848	Feb. 9	Appointed Provincial Secretary in the first responsible Executive Council in the British overseas Empire
	March 2	Returned in by-election for the County of Halifax

1850	Nov. 1	Sails for England on railway mission; returns on April 14, 1851
1851	Jan. 14	Speech at Southampton
	Aug. 21	Elected member for the County of Cumberland
	Nov. 29	Railway bills given royal assent
	Dec. 11	Receives letter from Lord Grey dated Nov. 27 stating that no guarantee had been intended for the Portland Branch
1852	March 20	Re-elected member of the Assembly for the County of Cumberland after his seat had been vacated because of an irregularity
	Oct. 28-Dec. 27	Negotiates loan in England for the building of railroads
1854	Feb. 24	Speech on "Organization of the Empire"
	March 31	His bill for the construction of Nova Scotian railways as public works given royal assent
	April 4	Resigns Provincial Secretaryship and is appointed Chief Commissioner of the Railway Board
1855	March-April	"Recruiting" mission in the United States
	May 22	Defeated by Charles Tupper in Cumberland
1856	Sept. 9	Returned in by-election as member for the township of Windsor
	Dec. 27	Letter in *Morning Chronicle* which provokes bitter conflict with the Catholics
1857	Feb. 18	Government defeated because of Catholic defections
	Feb. 19	Resigns as Chairman of the Railway Board
1858	Aug.-Dec.	Supervised publication in Boston of *Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* (Annand edition)
1859	May 12	Elected member of the Assembly for the South District of Hants
1860	Feb. 10	Becomes Provincial Secretary in the Young administration
	March 6	Re-elected in by-election for the South District of Hants
	Aug. 3	Becomes President of the Council and Premier
1861	Nov. 1	Leaves for England on railway matters
1862	Sept. 18	Speech at Niagara on "The Future of British North America"
	Oct. 17	Leaves for England on intercolonial railway matters
	Dec. 12	Appointed Fishery Commissioner under the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854
1863	May 28	Government defeated in general election; Howe defeated in the County of Lunenburg
1864	Aug. 13	Speech in favour of union to visitors from Canada
1865	Jan. 11-March 2	Publishes the "Botheration Letters" anonymously in the *Morning Chronicle*
	July 14	Speech at Detroit Convention

1866	April	Terminates Fishery Commissionership, and returns to Nova Scotia to oppose Confederation
	July 5	Leaves for England to oppose passage of an act of union
	Sept.-Oct.	Publishes pamphlets entitled *Confederation Considered in Relation to the Interests of the Empire* and *The Organization of the Empire*
1867	May 7	Returns to Nova Scotia from England
	Sept. 18	Elected member of Parliament for the County of Hants
1868	Feb. 14-July 17	Leads repeal delegation to England
	Sept. 15	Starts correspondence with Sir John Macdonald which leads to "better terms" and "acceptance of the situation"
1869	Jan. 30	Enters Macdonald's cabinet as President of the Council
	April 20	Re-elected member of Parliament for the County of Hants in a by-election
	Aug.-Oct.	Visit to the North West
	Nov. 16	Appointed Secretary of State for the Provinces
1872	Feb. 27	Address to the Young Men's Christian Association of Ottawa
	Aug. 15	Re-elected member of Parliament for the County of Hants
1873	May 10	Sworn in as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia
	June 1	Dies in Government House, Halifax

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Many of the extracts in this volume can be examined at greater length in *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe*, edited by WILLIAM ANNAND (Boston, 2 vols., 1858) and JOSEPH A. CHISHOLM (Halifax, 2 vols., 1909). An excellent selection of extracts on topics wider than the purely political is D. C. HARVEY'S *The Heart of Howe* (Toronto, 1939).

Much of the older biographical material on Howe, such as G. E. FENETY, *Life and Times of the Hon. Joseph Howe* (Saint John, 1896) and J. W. LONGLEY, *Joseph Howe* (Toronto, 1910) in the Makers of Canada series, leaves much to be desired, both factually and otherwise. Principal G. M. GRANT'S *Joseph Howe* (Halifax, 1906), which was reprinted from *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* of 1875, presents the viewpoint of one who knew Howe personally and who emphasizes his egotism as an important motivating force in determining his conduct, particularly in the Confederation issue. W. L. GRANT repeats his father's viewpoint in *The Tribune of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1915) in the Chronicles of Canada series. The most modern biography, JAMES A. ROY'S *Joseph Howe: A Study in Achievement and Frustration* (Toronto, 1935), is considerably better in its treatment of Howe the man of letters than of Howe the politician.

The best account of Howe's role in the struggle for responsible government is contained in CHESTER MARTIN, *Empire and Commonwealth* (Oxford, 1929). Professor Martin also edited "The Correspondence between Joseph Howe and Charles Buller, 1845-48," in the *Canadian Historical Review*, VI (December, 1925), pp. 310-31. G. A. RAWLYK presents differing points of view on Howe's character and work in his *Joseph Howe: Opportunist? Man of Vision? Frustrated Politician?* (Toronto, 1967).

J. MURRAY BECK has shown the relation between Howe's ideas of Empire and his quest for Imperial office in "Joseph Howe: Opportunist or Empire-builder?" in the *Canadian Historical Review*, XLI (September, 1960), pp. 185-202. He has also presented a more general account and assessment of Howe in *Our Living Tradition, Fourth Series* (Toronto, 1962). More recently he has traced the development of Howe's political thinking up to 1836 in "Joseph Howe: Mild Tory to Reforming Assemblyman," in *The Dalhousie Review*, XLIV (Spring, 1964), pp. 44-56.

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